THE CHRISTIANS GREAT INTEREST.

OR,

A short Treatise, divided into two Parts.

The first whereof, containeth
The Tryal of a saving interest in CHRIST.

The second, pointeth forth plainly *the way know to attain it*: Wherein somewhat is likewayes spoken to the manner of expresse Covenanting with GOD.

By *William Guthrie*, Minister of the Gospel at *New-Kilmarnock*.

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2 Pet. 1. 10. *Wherefore the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, &c.*

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves, know ye not your selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.*

Cant. 6. 3. *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine, &c.*

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To the READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,

WHile the generality of men, especially in these dayes, by their eager pursuit after low and base interests, have proclaimed, as upon the house tops, how much they have forgotten to make choose of that better part, which (if chosen) should never be taken from them. I have made an essay, such as it is, in the following Treatise, to take thee off from this unprofitable, though painful pursuit, by proposing the chiefest of Interests, even the Christians great Interest, *to be seriously pondered and constantly pursued by thee. Thou mayest think it strange to see any thing in Print from my Pen (as it is indeed a surprise to my self) But necessity hath made me for this once to offer, so much violence to my own inclination, in regard that some without my knowledge, have lately published some unperfect Notes of a few of my Sermons, most confusedly cast together, prefixing withall this vain Title (as displeasing to my self as the publishing of the thing)* A clear attractive Warming Beam, &c. *upon this occasion was I prevailed with to publish this late Piece, wherein I have purposely used a homely and plain stile, lest otherwise (though when I have stretched my self to the utmost, I am below the judicious and more understanding) I should be above the reach of the rude and ignorant, whose advantage I have mainly, if not only consulted: I have likewise studied brevity in every*

thing, so far as I conceived it to be consistent w plainness and perspicuity; knowing that the persons to whom I address my self herein, have neither much money to spend upon books, nor much time to spare in Reading. If thou be a rigid Critick, I know thou mayest meet with several things to carp at; yet assure thy self that I had no design to offend thee, neither will thy simple approbation satisfie me: it is thy Edification I intend, together with the Incitements of some others, more expert and experienced in this excellent Subject, to handle the same to greater length, which I have more briefly hinted at, who am

Thy Servant in the

work of the Gospel,

WILLIAM GUTHRIE.

THE

THE WHOLE TREATISE,
Resumed into a few *Questions* and *Answers*.

QUEST. 1.

WHat is the great busines a man hath to do in the world?

Answ. To make sure a saving interest in Christ Jesus, and to walk suitably thereunto.

Quest. 2. *Have not all the members of the visible Church a saving interest in Christ?*

A. No verily, yea, but a very few of them have it.

Q. 3. *How shal I know if I have a saving interest in him?*

A Ordinarly the Lord prepareth His own way in the soul, by a work of humiliation, and discovereth a mans sin and misery to him, exerciseth him so therewith, that he longs for the Physician Christ Jesus.

Q 4. *How shal know if I have got a competent discovery of my sin and misery?*

A. A competent sight of it, makes a man take Salvation to heart above any thing in this world: It maketh him disclaim all relief in himself, even in his best things; It maketh Christ, who is the Redeemer, very precious to the soul. It makes a man to stand in awe to sin afterwards, and makes him content to be saved upon any terms God pleaseth.

Q. 5. *What other way may I discern a saving interest in him?*

A. By the going out of my heart seriously and affectionatly towards Him, as He is held out in the

Gospel, and this is faith or believing.

Q. 6. *How shal I know if my heart goeth out after* Him *aright, and that my Faith is true saving Faith?*

A. Where the heart goeth out aright after Him, in true and saving faith, the soul pleaseth Christ alone in all his three Offices, to rule and instruct aswel as to save; and is content to cleave unto him whatsoever inconvenience may follow.

Quest. 7. *What other mark of a saving interest in Christ can you give to me?*

A. He that is in Christ savingly, is a new creature, he is graciously changed and renewed in some measure, in the whole man, and in all his wayes; pointing towards all the known commands of God.

Q. 8. *What if* I *find sin now and then prevailing over me?*

A. Although every sin deserveth everlasting vengeance, yet if you be afflicted for your failings, confesse them with shame of face unto God, resolving to strive against them honestly hence forth, and flee unto Christ for pardon, you obtain mercy, and your interest stands sure.

Q. 9. *What shal the man do who cannot claim to Christ Jesus, nor any of those marks spoken of?*

A. Let him not take rest, until he make sure unto himself a saving interest in Christ.

Q. 10 *What way can a man make sure he hath an interest in Christ, who never had a saving interest in Him hitherto?*

A. He must take his sins to heart, and his great

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hazard thereby, and he muſt take it to heart Gods offer of pardon and peace through Chriſt Jeſus, and heartily cloſe with Gods offer, by be-taking himſelf unto Chriſt, the bleſſed refuge.

Q. 11. *What if my ſins be ſingularly hainous and great beyond ordinary?*

A. Whatſoever thy ſins be, if thou wilt cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus by faith, thou ſhalt never enter into condemnation.

Q. 12. *Is faith in Chriſt only required of me?*

A. Faith is the only condition, upon which God doth offer peace & pardon unto men; but be aſſured, faith, if it be true & ſaving will not be alone in the ſoul, but wil be attended with true repentance a thankful ſtudy of conformity to Gods Image.

Q. 13. *How ſhal I be ſure that my heart doth accept of Gods offer, and doth cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus?*

A. Go make a Covenant expreſly, and by word ſpeak the thing unto God.

Q. 14. *What way ſhall I do that?*

A. Set a part ſome bit of time, and having conſidered your own loſt eſtate, and the relief offered by Chriſt Jeſus, work up your heart to pleaſe and cloſe with that offer, and ſay unto God expreſly that you do accept of that offer, and of him to be your God in Chriſt; & to give up your ſelf to Him to be ſaved in His way, without reſervation or exception in any caſe; and that you henceforth will wait for ſalvation the way he hath appointed.

Q. 15 *What if I break unto God afterwards?*

A. You muſt reſolve on his ſtrength not to break and watch over your own way, & put your heart

in His hand to keep it; And if you break, you must confesse it unto God, and judge your self for it, and flee to the Advocate for pardon, & resolve to do no more so, and this you must do as often as you fail.

Q. 16. *How shal I come to full assurance of my interest in Christ, so as it may be above controversie?*

A. Learn to lay your weight upon the blood of Christ, and study purity & holinesse in all manner of conversation, and pray for the witnesse of Gods Spirit, to joyn with the Blood, and the Water, and His Testimony added unto these, will establish you in the faith of an interest in Christ.

Q. 17. *What is the consequence of such closing with God in Christ by heart and mouth?*

A. Union and communion with God, all good here, and His blessed fellowship in heaven for ever afterwards.

Q. 18. *What if I slight all these things, and not lay them to heart to put them in practice?*

Q. The Lord commeth with his Angels in flamming fire, to render vengeance to them who obey not the Gospel; and thy judgement shal be greater than the judgement of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; and so much the greater, if thou hast read this Treatise; for it shal be a witnesse against thee in that day.

THE

The Tryal of a Saving Interest in CHRIST.

SInce there be so many People living under the Ordinances, pretending without ground to a special interest in Christ, and to his favour and Salvation, as is clear, *Mat.* 7.22 23. *Mat* 25.11,12. *Luk.* 13.24. And since many who have good ground to claim to Christ, are not established in the confidence of his favour, but remain in the dark without comfort, hesitating concerning the reality of godlinesse in themselves, and speaketh little to the commendation of Religion to others, especially in the time of their straits, I shal speak a little to two things of greatest concernment. The one is, *How a person shal know if he hath a true and special interest in Christ, and whether he doth lay just claim to Gods favour and salvation?* The other *is, In case a person fall short in the foresaid tryal. what course he shal take for making sure Gods friendship and Salvation to himself?*

Q. 1. *How shal a man know if he hath a true and special interest in Christ, and whether he hath or may lay claim justly to Gods favour and Salvation?*

A Before we speak directly to the Question, we shal premise some things to make way for the Answer: As, 1. That a mans interest in Christ, or gracious state may be known and that with more certainty than people do conjecture; yea, and the knowledge of it may be more easily attained unto than many do imagine: For, not only hath the

Lord commanded men to know their interest in him, as a thing attainable, 2*Cor*.13.5. 2 *Pet*.1.10. but many of the Saints have attainted unto the clear perswasion of their interest in Christ, and in God, as their own God; How often do they call him their God and their portion, and how perswaded is *Paul*, that nothing can separate him from the love of God? *Rom*. 8. 38. 39. Therefore the knowledge of a mans gracious state is attainable; and this knowledge of it, which may be attained, is no fancy and bare conceit, but it is most sure; *Doubtlesse, thou art our Father*, saith the Prophet in name of the Church, *Isa*. 63. 16. It is clear thus, 1. That can be no fancy, but a very sure knowledge which doth yeeld to a rational man cõfort in most real straits: But so doth this, 1 *Sam*. 30. 6. when the people spake of stoning *David*, he encouraged himself in the Lord, *Psal*. 3. 6. he saith there, *he will not be afraid of ten thousands that raise against him*. Compare these words with *v*. 3 of that psalm, *Ps*. 27. 1. 3. *Although an host encamp against him, he is confident in this*. 2. That is a sure knowledge of a thing which maketh a wise merchant sell all he hath that he may keep it sure: that maketh a man fore-go Children, lands, life, & suffer the spoiling of all joyfully; But so doth this, *Mat*. 13. 44. *Mark* 10. 28. 29. *Heb*. 10 34. *Rom* 5. 3. *Act*. 5. 41, 3. That must be a sure and certain knowledge, and no fancy, whereupon a man voluntarily and freely doth adventure his soul, when he is stepping in into eternity with this word in his mouth, *this is all my desire*: But such a knowledge is this, 2*Sam*.

23. 5.

23.5. And again, Not only may a godly man come to the ſure knowledge of his gracious ſtate, but it is more eaſily attainable than many do apprehend: for ſuppoſing what ſhal be afterwards proved, that a man may know the gracious work of Gods Spirit in himſelf) if he will but argue rationally from thence, he ſhal be forced to conclude his intereſt in Chriſt, Unleſſe he deny clear Scripture-truths. I ſhal only make uſe of one here, becauſe we are to ſpeak more directly to this afterwards. A godly man may argue thus, whoſoever receive Chriſt, are juſtly reputed the Children of God, *Joh.* 1.12. But I have received Chriſt all the wayes which the Word there can import: for I pleaſe the device of Salvation by Chriſt; I agree to the terms, I welcome the offer of Chriſt in all his offices, as a King, to rule over me; a Prieſt, to offer and interceed for me; a Prophet, to teach me; I lay out my heart for him and towards him, reſting on him as I am able, what elſe can be meant by the word *receiving*? Therefore may I ſay and conclude plainly and warrantably, I am juſtly to reckon my ſelf Gods Child according to the foreſaid Scripture, which cannot fail.

The ſecond thing to be premiſed, is, That a man be ſavingly in Covenant with God, is a matter of higheſt importance, it is his life, *Deut.* 32.47. & yet very few have or ſeek after a ſaving intereſt in the Covenant, and many fooliſhly think they have ſuch a thing without any ſolid ground, *Mat.* 7.14. few find, or walk in the narrow way. This ſhould allarm people to be ſerious about the matter, ſince

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it is of so great consequence to be in Christ. And since there be but few that may lay just claim to to him, and yet may do foolishly fancy an interest in him, who are deceived by a false confidence, as the foolish virgins do, *Matth.* 25

The third thing to be premised; is, Men must resolve to be determined by Scripture in this matter of their interest in Christ. The Spirit speaking in the Scripture, is Judge of all controversies (*Isa.* 8. 20. *To the Law and the Prophets; and if it speak not according to these, there is no truth in it*) and of this also, whether a man be savingly in Covenant with God, or not. Therefore do not mock God whilst you seem to search after such a thing. If we prove from Scripture (which is the uncontroverted Rule) that you are gracious, and have stricken Covenant savingly with God, then resolve to grant so much, and to acquiesce in it: and if the contrary appear, let there be a determination of the controversie, else you do but mock the Lord and so your bonds shall be made strong, *Isa.* 28. 22. for a jot of his word cannot fail, *Mat.* 5. 18. Therefore seek eye-salve from Christ to judge of things according as the Word of God shall discover them to be.

The fourth thing to be premised, is, Although the matter of a mans interest in Christ be of so great importance, and the way to attain to the knowledge of it, so plainly held forth in the Scriptures, yet there be but few who reach the distinct knowledge of it; And that this may not discourage any person from attempting it, I shall hint some

ſome few reaſons, why ſo few come to the clear knowledge of it, which will alſo prepare the way for what is to be ſpoken afterwards.

The firſt thing which doth hinder many from the knowledge of their intereſt in Chriſt, is, Their ignorance of ſome ſpecial principles of Religion: as, 1. That it was free love in Gods boſom, and nothing in man that moved him to ſend a Saviour to perfect the work of Redemption, *Joh.* 3.16. *God ſo loved the world, that he ſent, &c.* Men are ſtill ſeeking ſome ground for that buſineſſe in themſelves, which leads away from ſuitable and high apprehenſions of the firſt ſpring and riſe of Gods Covenant-favour to his People, which hath no reaſon, cauſe, or motive in us; and ſo they cannot come to the kowledge of their intereſt. 2. They are ignorant how that love doth effectually diſcover it ſelf to a mans heart, ſo as he hath ground to lay claim to it, *viz.* That ordinarily it doth firſt diſcover his broken ſtate in himſelf becauſe of ſin and corruption defiling the whole man, and any thing in him that might be called a righteouſneſſe; all theſe things are loſſe and dung, *Phil.* 3.6 7. Secondly, it diſcovereth Chriſt as the full and ſatisfying treaſure above all things. The man finds a treaſure for which, w joy, he ſelleth all &c. *Mat.* 13.44,46. Thirdly, It determineth the heart, and cauſeth it to approach unto a living God in the Ordinances, *Pſal.* 65. 4. And cauſeth the heart to lay weight upon him, and him alone, *Pſal.* 62. 5. *My ſoul, wait thou only upon God.* Thus, having dropped in the ſeed of God in the heart, and formed Chriſt there,

there, *Gal.* 4. 19. the heart is changed and made new in the forsaid work *Ezek.* 36. 26 & Gods Law is so stamped upon the heart in that change, *Jer.* 31. 33. that the whole yoke of Christ is commended to the man without exception, *Rom* 7. 12. 16. The Law is acknowledged good, holy, just and spiritual: upon all which, from that new principle of life, there flow out acts of a new life (*Gal.* 5 6. *Faith worketh by love.* *Rom.* 6. 18 22. And the man becometh a servant of righteousnes & unto God) which doth especially appear in the spiritually of worship (*Joh* 4 24. *Rom* 7. 6. -- men then serve God in spirit, and truth, and in the newnes of the Spirit, and not in the oldnes of the letter) and tenderness in all manner of conversation; The man then exerciseth himself how to keep a conscience void of offence, &c. *Act.* 24. 16. Now, this way doth the love of God discover it self unto man and acteth on him, so as he hath ground of laying some good claim to it; so as he may justly think, that the love which sent a Saviour, had respect to such a man as had these things made out unto him. Surely, ignorance in this doth hinder many from the knowledge of their interest in Christ: for, if a man know not how God worketh with a person, so as he may justly lay claim to his love which was from eternity, he will wander in the dark, and not come to the knowledge of an interest in him. 3. Many are also ignorant of this, That God alone is the hope of his people; He is called *the hope of Isral*, *Jer.* 14. 8. Although inherent qualifications are evidences of it, yet the staying

ſtaying of the heart upon him as a full bleſſing and ſatisfying portion, is Faith (1*Pet.*1.21. The faith and hope muſt be in God) and the only proper condition which giveth right to the ſaving bleſſings of the covenant, *Rom.*4.5. *To him that worketh not, but believeth---faith is imputed for righteouſneſs.* Indeed if any perſon take liberty here, and turn grace into wantōneſs there is, without doubt, in ſo far, a deluſion; Since there is mercy with him upon condition, that it conciliat fear to him. *Pſ.*130. 4. Yea, hardly can any man, who hath found the foreſaid expreſſions of Gods love made out upon him, make a cloak of the Covenant for ſinful liberty, without ſome meaſure of a ſpiritual conflict; In this reſpect, He that is born of God, doth not ſin; and he who doth ſo ſin, hath not ſeen God, 1 *John* 3. 6. 9. I ſay, God is the hope of his people, and not their own holineſs. If they intend honeſtly and long ſeriouſly to be like unto him, many failings ſhould not weaken their hope and confidence: for it is in him who changeth not, *Mal.* 3. 6. *And if any man ſinneth, he hath an Advocate.* 1 Joh.2.1. Now, when men place their hope in any other thing beſide the Lord, it is no wonder they be kept in a ſtaggering condition, according to the changes of the thing which they make the ground of their hope, ſince they give not God the glory due to his Name, and which he will not give to another: compare *Pſ.* 9. 10. (*They who know thy Name, will put their truſt in thee*) with *Iſa.* 42. 8. *My glory I will not give to another: I am the Lord, that is my Name.* 4. Many are ignorant of

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the different wayes and degrees of Gods working with his people, and it doth much darken their knowledge and reflex acts of their interest in him. This ignorance doth run mainly on three heads: (1) They are ignorant of the different degrees & ways of y Law-work which ordinarly dealeth with men, and of the different way how the Lord bringeth home People at first to Christ. They consider not that the Jaylor is not kept an hour in bondage, *Act.* 16. *Paul is* kept in suspense three dayes, *Act.* 9 *Zacheus* not one moment, *Luke* 19. (2.) They are ignorant of, at least do not consider how different the degrees of Sanctification are in the Saints, and the honourable appearings thereof before men, in some, and the sad blemishing thereof in others: Some are very blameless and more free of gross out-breakings adorning their Profession much, as *Job*, *Job* 1. and *Zechariah*, *Luke* 1. These are said to be perfect, walking in all the Commandments of God. Others were subject to very gross and sad evils, as *Solomon*, *Asa* &c. (3.) They are ignorant of the different comunications of Gods face, and expressions of his presence; some do walk much in the light of Gods countenance, and are much sensible fellowship with him, as *David* was; others are all their dayes kept in bondage through fear of death, *Heb.* 2 15. Surely the ignorance of the different wayes of Gods working and dealing with his people, doth very much darken the knowledg of their interest in him whilest they usually stint the Lord to one way of working, which he doth not keep, as we have

shewed

shewed in the former examples.

The second thing which doth darken men about their interest in Christ, is, There is one thing or other, wherein their heart in some respect doth condemn them, as dealing deceitfully and guiltfully with God It is not to be expected, that these can come to clearness about their interest, whose heart doth condemn them for keeping up some known transgression against the Lord, which they will not let go, neither are using the means which they know to be appointed by God for delivering them from it: neither can these come to clearness, who know some positive duty commanded them in their stations, which they deceitfully shift and shun, not closing chearfully with it, or not willing to be led into it; These are also in some respect, condemned of their own heart, as the former sort; and in that case it is difficult to come to a distinct knowledge of their state, 1 *John* 3. 21. It is supposed there, that a self-condemning heart maketh void a 'mans confidence proportionally before God. I do not deny but that men may on good grounds, plead an interest in Christ in the case of prevailing iniquity, *Psal.* 6. 5. 3. *Rom.* 7. 23. 25. but it is hard to be attained, if at all attainable, when the heart is deceitfully dealing, and entertaining known guile in a particular: Therefore let people clear themselves of the particular which they know too wel. It is the thing which doth meet them, marring their confidence and accesse in all their approaches unto God. See *Judge* 10. 13. The Idolateries of the people are

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cist up to them by the Lord, and their suit rejected thereupon. That which withdraweth away the heart first in the morning, and last at night, like an Oven heated at night, and it burneth as a flaming fire in the morning, spoken of the wicked, *Hos.* 7. 6. And taketh up their thoughts often on their bed, as it is said of some, *Psal.* 36. 4. That which doth lead away the heart in time of religious duty ordinarly, and the remembrance of which hath power to enlive and quicken the spirits, more than the remembrance of God, so as their heart is after the heart of some detestable thing, *Ezek.* 11. 21. That which withstandeth men when they would grip the promise, as God casteth up mens sins to them who are medling with His Covenant, *Psal.* 50. 16. 17 That is the thing which doth marr the knowledg of a gracious state; let it go, and it will be more easie to reach the knowledg of an interest in Christ.

The third thing which hindereth the knowledge of interest in Christ, is a spirit of sloath and careless negligence in many; They complain that they know not whether they be in Christ or not, but, as few take pains to be in him, so few take pains to try if they be in him. It is a work and business which cannot be done sleeping, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. The several words used there, *viz. Examine, prove, know*---say the there is a labour in it, diligence must be used to make our calling and election sure, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. it is a business above flesh and blood; the holy Anointing, which teacheth all things must make us know the things freely given us of God,

1 *Cor.*

1 *Cor.* 13. 5. Shal the Lord impart a business of so great concernment, and not so much as be enquired after to do it for men? *Ezek.* 36. 37. Be ashamed you who spend so much time in reading Romances in adorning your persons, in hawking and hunting, in consulting the Law anent your outward state in the world, and it may be in worse things than these; Be ashamed that you spend so little time in the search of this, whether ye be an heir of glory or not; whether you be in the way that leadeth to heaven, or that way which will land you in darkness for ever. You who judge this below you and unworthy of your pains, any part or minute of your time: It is like in Gods account, you have judged your selves unworthy of everlasting life, so as they shall have no lot with Gods people in this matter.

The fourth thing that doth darken the knowledge of interest in Christ, is, men do not condescend upon what would satisfie them; They complain that God will not shew unto them what He is about to do with them; but cannot yet say they know what would satisfie anent His purpose. This is a sad thing. Shal we think those are serious who have never as yet pitched on what would satisfie them, nor are making earnest enquiry after what should satisfie? If the Lord had left us in the dark in that matter, we were lesse inexcusable: but since the grounds of satisfaction, and the true marks of interest in Christ, are so clear and frequent in Scripture, and so many things written, that our joy may be full. 1 *Joh.* 1. 4. and that those

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who believe may know that they have eternal life 1 *Joh.* 5. 13. and since he that believeth hath a witness of it in himself, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. None can pretend excuse here: we may not here insist to shew what may & should satisfie anent our interest, since we are to speak directly to it afterwards.

The fifth thing that helpeth much to keep men in the dark anent their interest in Christ, is, They pitch upon some mutable grounds which are not so opposit proofs of the truth of an interest in Christ, as of the comfortable state of a triumphing soul-sailing before the wind and marks, which I grant are precious in themselves, and do make out an interest clearly where they are; yet they are such, as without which an interest in Christ may be, and be known also in a good measure; we shal touch a few of them. (1.) Some think that all who have a true interest in him, are above the prevailing power of every sin. But this is contrary to that of *Psal.* 65 3. where we find that holy man laying just claim to pardon, in ȳ case of prevailing iniquity, and that of *Rom.* 7. 23. 24. 25. where *Paul* thanketh God through Christ, as freed from the condemnation of the Law, even whilst a law in his members leadeth him captive unto sin. (2.) Some think that all true Saints have constantly accesse unto God in prayer, and sensible returns of prayer at all times. But this is contrary to the many sad exercises of his people, complaining often, that they are not heard nor regarded of God, *Psal.* 13. 1, *Psal* 22. 1, 2. (3.) Some think that all who have any true interest in Him, have God witnessing

witneſſing ȳ ſame unto them by a high operation of that witneſſing-ſpirit of his ſpoken of *Rom.* 8. 16. (whereof afterwards) and ſo they ſtill ſuſpect their own intereſt in Chriſt, becauſe of the want of this. But they do not remember that they muſt firſt believe, and give credit to that record, which God hath given to the Son, that there is life enough in Him for men, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. 11. and then look for the ſeal and witneſs of the Spirit, *Eph.* 1. 13. *In whom after ye believed, ye were ſealed with the holy ſpirit of promiſe, &c.* As long as people hold faſt theſe principles and the like, they can hardly come to the knowledge of their gracious ſtate, which God hath warranted people to prove and clear up to themſelves, otherwayes than by theſe forſaid things.

The fifth thing to be premiſed, is, the removal of ſome miſtakes whereunto people may readily run themſelves, when we are about to Prove their intereſt in Chriſt. As, 1. It is a miſtake to think, that every one who is in Chriſt, doth know that he is in Him: For many are truly gracious, and have a good title to eternal life who do not know ſo much, until it be made out afterwards. 1 *John* 5. 13. Theſe things are written to Believers, that they may know they have a true title to eternal life; that is, that they may know they are Believers, and ſo it ſuppoſed they knew it not before. 2. It is a miſtake to think, that all who come to the knowledge of their intereſt in Chriſt, do attain an equal certainty about the ſame; One may ſay, he is perſwaded nothing preſent or to come can ſeparate

parate him from the love of God, *Rom.* 8. 38. Another cometh but this length, I *believe, help my unbelief*, *Mark* 9. 24. 3. It is a mistake to think, that every one who attaineth a strong perswasion of his interest, doth alwayes hold there; for he who to day may say of the Lord, *He is his refuge*, Psal 91. 2. and *his portion*. Psal. 119. 57. wil at another time say, he *is cut off*. Psal. 31. 22. and will ask, if the truth of Gods promise *doth fail for evermore*, Psal. 77. 7. 8, 9. 4. It is also a mistake to think, that every one who doth attain a good knowledge of their gracious state, can formally answer all objections made to the contrary; But yet they may hold fast the conclusion, and say, *I know whom I have believed*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. There be few grounds of Christian Religion whereof many people are so perswaded, as that they are able to maintain them formally against all arguments brought to the contrary, and yet they may and will hold the conclusion stedfastly and justly: so it is in this case in hand. 5. It is no lesse a mistake to imagine, That the vain, groundless confidence which many profain ignorant Atheists do maintain, is this knowledge of an interest in Christ, which we plead for; Many do falsly avow him to be their Father, *Joh.* 8. 41. and many look for heaven, who will be beguiled with those foolish Virgins, *Matth.* 25. 12. Yet we must not think because of this, that all knowledge of interest is a delusion and fancy, although these fools be deceived; for whilst thousands are deluded, some can say on good and solid grounds, *We know that we are of God, and the*

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the whole world lieth in wickedness, 1 *John* 5. 19.

Having premised these things, it now followeth that we give some marks by which a man may know if he be savingly in Covenant with God, and hath a special interest in Christ, so as he may warrantably lay claim to Gods favour and Salvation. We shall only pitch upon two great and principal marks, not willing to trouble people with many: And before we fall upon these, we will speak of a preparatory work of the Law, whereof the Lord doth ordinarily make use, to prepare his own way in mens souls. This may have its own weight, as a mark, with some persons. It is called, the work of the Law, or the work of humiliation. It hath some proportion to that spirit of bondage, *Rom.* 8. 5. And doth now under the New Testament answer unto it, and usually leadeth on to the spirit of Adoption. Only here let it be remembred, 1. That we are not to speak of this preparatory work of the Law, as a negative mark of true interest in Christ, as if none might lay claim to Gods favour, who hath not had his Preparatory work in the several steps of it, as we are to speak of it; for as we shal hear, the Lord doth not alwayes keep that path with men. 2. The great reason why we speak of it, is, Because the Lord dealeth with many (whom he doth effectually call) by some such preparatory work. And to those who have been so dealt with, it may prove strengthning, and will confirm them in laying the more weight on the marks which follow. 3. It may help to encourage others, who are under such bondage of spirit,

rit, as a good prognostick of a gracious work to follow: For, as we shal circumstantiat it, it will be rarely found to miscarry and fail of a gracious issue.

4. Where God useth such a preparatory work, He doth not keep one way or measure in it, as we shal hear.

For the more distinct handling of this preparatory work, we shal shortly hint the most ordinary wayes, by which the Lord leadeth people in into the Covenant savingly, and draweth them unto Christ.

First, There are some called from the womb, as *John* the Baptist was, *Luke* 1. 41, 44. Or, in their very young years, before they can be deeply engaged actively in Satans wayes, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. It cannot be supposed that those have such a preparatory work as we are to speak of. And because some Persons may pretend to this way of effectual calling, we offer these marks of it, whereby those who have been so called may be confirmed. 1. Such use from them childhood to be kept free of odinary pollutions, wherewith children usually are defiled; as swearing, lying, mocking of Religion and religious persons, *&c.* Those whom God calleth effectually, he sanctifieth them from the time of that effectual calling: Sin cannot have dominion over them as over others, because they are under grace, *Rom.* 6. 14. (2.) Religion is, as it were natural to them; I mean, they need not be much pressed to religious duties, even when they are but children; They run willingly that way, because there is an inward principle of

love

love constraining them, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. so as they yeeld themselves servants of righteousness, without outward constraint, *Rom.* 6. 16. (3.) Although such know not when they were first acquainted with God, yet they have afterwards such exercises of spirit befalling; as the *Saints* in Scripture (of whose first conversion we hear not) do speak of. They are shut out from God, upon some occasion now and then, and are admitted to come nearer again, (to their apprehension) their heart is also further broken up by the Ordinances, as is said of *Lydia*, *Acts* 16.14. And ordinarily they do remember, when some special bit of Religion and Duty, or when some sin, of which they were not taking notice before, was discovered to them. They who can apply these things to themselves, have much to say for their effectual calling from their youth.

Secondly, Some are brought in to Christ in a soveraign Gospel way, when the Lord by some few words of love swallowing up any Law-work, quickly taketh a person prisoner at the first, as he did *Zacheus*, *Luke* 19. and others, who upon a word spoken by Christ, did leave all and follow him; and we hear no noise of a Law-work dealing with them before they close with Christ Jesus. And because some may pretend to this way of calling, we shal touch some things most remarkable in that transaction w *Zacheus*, for their clearing and confirmation. 1. He had some desires to see Christ, and such a desire, as made him wave that which some would have judged prudence and dis-

crection, whileſt he climbeth up upon a tree that he might ſee him. 2. Chriſt ſpake to his heart, and that word took ſuch hold upon him, that preſently with joy he did accept of Chriſts offer, and cloſeth with Chriſt as Lord, whileſt few of any note were following him. 3. Upon this his heart doth open to the poor, although, it ſeems, he was a covetous man before. 4. He hath a due impreſſion of his former ways, evidencing his reſpect to *Moſes* his Law, and this he doth ſignifie before all the company then preſent, not caring to ſhame himſelf in ſuch things as (probably) were notour to the world. 5. Upon all theſe things, Chriſt confirmeth and ratifieth the bargain by his word, recommending to him that oneneſs of intereſt, which behoved to be between him and the Saints, and the thoughts of his own loſt condition; if Chriſt had not come and ſought him and found him; All which are clear, *Luke* 19. 3,---10. We grant the Lord calleth ſome ſo: and if any can lay claim to the ſpecial things we have now hinted, they have a good confirmation of Gods dealing with them from that Scripture; Neither, are they to vex themſelves, becauſe of the want of a diſtinct preparatory Law-work, if their heart hath yeelded unto Chriſt. For, a Law-work is not deſirable, except for this end. Therefore Chriſt doth offer himſelf directly in the Scripture, and people are invited to come to him: and although many will not come to him who is the Caurioner, until the ſpirit of bondage diſtreſſe them for their debt; yet if any upon the knowledge

ledge of their loſt eſtate, would flee and yeeld to Chriſt, none might warrantably preſſe a Law-work upon them. As for others, whom Chriſt perſwaded by a word to follow him, whatſoever he did, or howſoever he ſpake to them at his firſt meeting with them, we muſt rationally ſuppone, that then he diſcovered ſo much of their own neceſſity, and His own fulneſs and excellency to them, as made them quite all and run after him. And if he do to to any, we crave no more, ſince there is room enought there for the Phyſician. So that from all this, as ſome may be confirmed and ſtrengthned, w whom God hath ſo dealt; So there is no ground nor occaſion for deluded ſouls to flatter themſelves in their condition, who remain ignorant and ſenſleſs of their own miſeries and Chriſts alſufficiency, and hold faſt deceit.

Thirdly, there are ſome brought in to Chriſt in a way yet more declarative of his free grace: and this is, when he effectually calleth men at the hour of death. We find ſomewhat recorded of this way in that pregnant example of the Thief on the croſs *Luke* 23. 39,----45. Although this ſeems not very pertinent for the purpoſe in hand; yet we ſhal ſpeak a little of it, that, on the one hand men may be ſparing to judge and paſs ſentence upon either themſelves or others, before the laſt gaſp. And we ſhal ſo circumſtanciate it, that on the other hand, none may dare to delay ſo great a buſineſs to the laſt hour of their life. We find theſe things remarkable in that buſineſs between Chriſt and the Thief: 1. The man falleth at odds with his

former companion. 2. He dareth not speak a wrong word of God, whose hand is on him, but justifieth Him in all that is befallen him. 3. He now seeth Jesus Christ persecuted by the world wout a cause, and most injuriously. 4. He discovereth Christ to be a Lord and a King, whilest enemies seem to have him at under. 5. He believeth a Being of glory after death so really, that he preferreth a portion of it to the present safety of his bodily life, which he knew Christ was able to grant to him at that time, and he might have chosen that with the other thief. 6. Although he was much abased in himself, and so humbled, that he pleaded but that Christ would remember him, Yet he was nobly daring to throw himself upon the Covenant, on life and death; and he had so much faith of Christs al-sufficiency, that he judged a simple remembrance from Christ, would satisfyingly do his business. 7. He acquiesced sweetly in the word which Christ spake to him, for the ground of his comfort. All which are very clear in the case of that poor dying man, and do prove a very real work of God upon his heart. As this example may encourage some to wait for good from God, who cannot as yet lay clear claim to any gracious work of his Spirit: So we obtest all, as they love their souls, not to delay your soul-business, hoping for such a cast of Christs hand in end, as too many do; this being a rare miracle of mercy, with the glory whereof Christ did honourably triumph over the ignominy of his cross: a parallel of which we shall hardly find in all the Scripture

ture beside, Yea, as there be but few at all saved, *Matth.*20.16. and most few saved this way: so the Lord hath peremptorily threatned to laugh at the calamity, and not to hear the cry of such as mocked formerly at His reproof, and would not hear when He called to them, *Prov.* 1. 24, 26. which Scripture, although it doth not shut mercies door upon any, who at the hour of death, do sincerely judge themselves and flee to Christ, as this penitent thief did: Yet it is certain, it implyeth that very few who sit the offer until then, are honoured with repentance as he was, and so their cry, as not being sincere and of the right stamp, shal not be heard.

The fourth and most ordinary way, by which many are brought in to Christ, is, by a clear and discernable work of the Law and humiliation, which we ordinarily call *the spirit of bondage*, as was hinted before. We do not mean that every one whose conscience is weakened with sin and fear of wrath, doth really close with Christ, the contrary doth appear in *Cain*, *Saul*, *Judas*, *&c.* But there is a conviction of sin, a wakening of conscience, and work of humiliation, which, as we shal circumstantiat it, doth rarely miscarry or fail of a gracious issue, but ordinarily doth resolve into the Spirit of Adoption, and a gracious work of Gods Spirit. And because the Lord dealeth with many sinners this way, and we find that many are puzled about the giving judgement of this Law-work.

This work is either more violent and suddenly

expede, or it is more sober and lent, protracted through a great length of time, and so, as the steps of it are very discernable. It is more violent in some, as in the Jaylor, *Paul*, and some other converts in the Book of the *Acts of the Apostles*, on whom Christ did break it at an instant, and fell on them as with fire and sword, and led them captive terribly; And because some great legal shakings are deceitful and turn to nothing, if not worse, we shal point at some things remarkable in these Converts, spoken of before, which did prove the work of the Law on them to have had a gracious issue & result. (1.) Some word of truth or dispensation, putteth the person to a dreadful stand, with a great stir in the soul: Some are Pricked in heart, *Acts* 2. 37. Some fell on trembling, *Acts* 16. 29. and this is such a stir, that ỹ person is brought to his wits end: *What wilt thou have me to do*, saith *Paul*? *Act.* 9. *What shall I do* saith the Jaylor? *Act.* 16. 30. (2.) The person is content to have Salvation and Gods friendship on any terms, as the questions do import, *What shal I do*? as if he had said, What would I not do? what would I not fore go? what would I not undergo? (3.) The person accepteth the condition offered by Christ and his servants, as is clear in the fore-cited Scripture. (4.) The person Presently becometh of one interest with the Saints, Joyning himself with that persecuted society, putting respect on those whom he had formerly persecuted, Joyning and continuing with them in the profession of Christ on all hazards. Those with whom the Lord

hath

hath ſo dealt, have much to ſay for a gracious work of Gods ſpirit in them; and it is like, many of them can date their work from ſuch a particular time and word, or diſpenſation, and can give ſome account of what paſt between God and them, and of a ſenſible change following in them from that time forward, as *Paul* giveth a good account of the work and way of God with him afterwards, *Act.* 22.

Again, the Lord ſometimes carrieth on his work more calmly, ſoftly and lently, protracting it ſo, as the ſeveral ſteps of mens exerciſe under it are very diſcernable. It would draw a great length to enlarge every ſtep of it, we ſhal touch the moſt obſervable things in it.

1. The Lord laveth ſiege to men, (who, it may be, have often refuſed to yeeld to him offering himſelf in the Ordinances) and by ſome word preached read, or born on the mind, or by ſome providence leading in unto the word, he doth aſſault the houſe kept peaceable by the ſtrong man, the devil; and thus, Chriſt who is the ſtronger man, cometh upon him, *Luke* 11. 22. and by the Spirit of Truth, doth faſten the *Word* on the man, in which Gods curſe is denounced againſt ſuch and ſuch ſins, whereof the man knoweth himſelf guilty. The Spirit convinceth the man, and bindeth it upon him, that he is the ſame perſon againſt whom the word of God doth ſpeak, becauſe he is guilty of ſuch ſins, and from ſome ſins the man is led on to ſee moe, until (ordinarily) he come to ſee the ſins of his youth, ſins of omiſſion, *&c.* Yea, he is led on untill he ſee himſelf guilty almoſt of

the breach of the whole Law: he seeth innumberable evils compassing him, as *David* speaketh in a fit of exercise, *Psal.* 40. 12. A man sometimes will see ugly sights of sin in this case, and sharp sighted to reckon a sibness to every sin almost. Thus the Spirit convinceth of sin, *Joh.* 16 8.

2. The Lord shaketh a special strong hold in the garison, a refuge of lies, to which the man betaketh himself when his sins are thus discovered to him. The poor man pretendeth to faith in Christ, whereby he thinks his burden is taken off him, as the Pharisees said, *Joh.* 8. 41. *We have one Father, even God.* They pretended to a special relation to God as a common Lord. The Spirit of God beats the man from this by the truth of the Scriptures, proving that he hath no true faith, and so no interest in Christ, nor any true saving grace; showing clear differences between true grace and counterfeit fancies which the man hath in him & between him, and the truely godly, as Christ laboureth to do to those, *Joh.* 8. 42. 44. *If God were your Father, ye would love me. Ye are of the devil, for ye do the lusts of such a father.* So, *fear surpriseth the hypocrite in heart,* Isa. 33. 14. especially when the Lord discovereth to him conditions in many of these promises (wherein he trusted most) not easily attainable, he now seeth grace and faith another thing than once he judged them to be. We may in some respect, apply that word hear, *The Spirit convinceth him of sin, because he hath not believed on the Son;* he is particularly convinced of unbelief, *Joh.* 16. 9. He seeth now a huge distance

stance between himself and the godly, who he thought before outstripped him only in some unnecessary, proud, hateful preciseness; he now seeth himself deluded and in the broad way with the perishing multitude; and so, in this sight of his misery, coucheth down under his own burden, which, before this time, he thought Christ did bear for him; he now beginneth to scar at the Promises, because of that and such other words, *What hast thou to do to take my Covenant in thy mouth, &c?* Psal. 50. 16.

3. The man becometh carefull about his Salvation, and beginneth to take it to heart, as the one thing necessary; he is brought to this with the Jaylor, *Act.* 16. *What shal I do to be saved?* his salvation becometh the leading thing with him: It was least in his thoughts before, but now it prevaileth, & other things are much misregarded by him: Since his soul is ready to perish, what shall it profit him to gain the World, if he lose his Soul? *Mat.* 19 26. Some here are much puzled w the thoughts of an irrevocable decree to their prejudice, and with the fears of uncertain death, which may attrach them before they get matters put to a point; and some are vexed with apprehensions, that they are guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is unpardonable, and so are driven a dangerous length, Satan still casting up to them many sad examples of people, who have doolfully put an end to their own exercise: but they are in the hand of one who knoweth how to succour them that are tempted, *Heb* 2. 18.

4. When a man is thus in hazard of miscarying, the Lord useth a work of preventing mercy towards him, quietly and under-hand supporting him; and this is by bearing upon his mind the possibility of his Salvation, leading the man to the remembrance of pregnant proofs of Gods free & rich grace, pardoning gross transgressions, such as *Manasseh*, who was a bloody idolatrous man, and had correspondence with the devil, and yet obtained mercy, 2 *Chrom.* 33. 11, 13. And other Scriptures bearing offers of grace and favour indifferently to all who will yeeld to Christ, whatsoever they have been formerly; So as the man is brought again to this, *What shal I do to be saved?* which doth suppone, that he apprehendeth a possibility of being saved, else he would not propound the question. He applieth that, or the like word to himself, *It may be, ye shal be hid*, Zeph. 2. 3. he findeth nothing excluding him from mercy now, if he have a heart for the thing. Although here, it may be, the man doth not perceive, that it is the Lord who upholdeth, yet afterwards he can tell, That when his foot was slipping, Gods mercy held him up, as *Psal.* 94. 17, 18. the Psalmist speaketh in another case. And he will afterwards say, when he was as a beast, and a fool in many respects, God held him by the hand, *Psal.* 73. 22. 23.

5. After this discovery of a possibility to be saved, there is a work of desire quickened in the soul; which is clear in that same expression, *What shal I do to be saved?* But sometimes this desire is

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airted amisse, whilest it goeth out thus; What shal I do that I may work the works of God? *Joh.* 6. 28. In which case, the man formerly perplexed with fear and care about his *Salvation*, would be at some work of his own to extricate himself; and here he suddenly resolveth to do all that is commanded, and to fore-go every evil way (yet much miskenning Christ Jesus) and so beginneth to take some courage to himself again, establishing his own righteousnes but not submitting to the Righteousnes of God, *Rom.* 10. 3. Whereupon the Lord maketh a new assault on him, intending the discovery of his absolutly broken state in himself, that so room may be made for the Cautioner; As *Joshua* did to the People, when he found them so bold in their undertakings, *Josh.* 24. 18. 19. *You cannot serve the Lord*, saith he, *for he is a holy God, a jealous God, &c.* In this new assault the Lord, 1. Bends up against the man, the spirituality of the Law, The Commandement cometh with a new charge in the spiritual meaning of it, Rom. 7. 9 *The Law came* (saith *Paul*) *viz.* in the spiritual meaning of it. *Paul* had never seen such a sight of the Law before. 2. God most holily doth loose the restraining bonds which he had laid upon the mans corruption, and suffereth it not only to boyl and swell within, but to threaten, to break out in all the outwards members. Thus sin groweth bold, and kicketh at the Law, becoming exceeding sinful, *Rom.* 7. 8. 9. 13. 3. The Lord doth discover to the man more now than ever before, the uncleanness of his righteousnes, & what spots

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are in his best things. These things kill the man, & he dieth in his own conceit, *Rom.* 7. 9. and despareth of relief in himself, if it come not from another airth.

5. After many ups and downs here, ordinarily, the man resolveth some retirement, he desireth to be alone, he cannot keep company as before, like those who in a besieged City, when they see they cannot hold out, and would be glad of any good condition from the besieging enemy, they go to a Council, that they may resolve somewhat. So the man here retireth, that he may speak with himself. This is like that communing with our own heart, *Psal.* 44. Thus God leadeth to the wilderness, that he may speak to the heart. *Hos.* 2. 14. When the person is retired, the thoughts of the heart which were scattered in former steps of the exercise, do more observably throng in here. We shal reduce them into this method. 1. The man thinks of his unhappy folly in bearing arms against God: and here there be large thoughts of former wayes, with a blushing countenance and self-loathing, *Ezek.* 36. 31. like that of *Psal.* 51. 3. his sins is before him. 2. Then he remembreth how far opportunities of yeelding to God he hath basely lost: his spirit is like to faint when he remembreth that, as is said in another case, *Psal.* 42. 4. 5. 3. He now thinks of many Christians, whom he mocked and dispised in his heart, perswading himself now that they are happy, as having chosen the better part, he thinks of the condition of those who wait on Christ, as ỹ Queen *Sheba* did of *Solo-*

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mons servants: *Happy are thy servants* (saith she) *who stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom*, 1 King. 10. 8. *Blessed are they that dwel in thy house, &c.* Psal. 84. 4. He wisheth to be one of the meanest who have any near relation to God, as the prodigal son doth speak, he would be as one of the fathers hired servants; *Luke* 15. 7. 19. 4. Then he calleth to mind the good report that is gone abroad of God, according to that testimony, *Jona* 4. 2. The Prophet knew that God was a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, &c. The free and large promises and offers of grace come in here; and the glorious practices which have past upon sinners of all sorts, according to the same of God in Scripture. 5. He thinks with himself, Why hath God spared me so long, and why have I got such a sight of my sin? and why hath he kept me from breaking Prison at my own hand, in choosing some unhappy outgate? Why hath he made this strange change on me? It may be, it is in his heart to do me good, O if it I may be so!.... Altho all these thoughts be not in the preparatory Work of every one, yet they are with many, and very promising where they are.

7. Upon all these thoughts and meditations, the man more seriously than ever before resolveth to pray, and to make some essay with God, upon life and death; he concludeth, it can be no worse with him: for, if he sit still, he perisheth as the Lepers speak, 2 *King.* 7. 3. 4. He considereth with the pinched prodigal son, that there is bread enough in

in the fathers houſe, and to ſpare, whileſt he periſhed for want: ſo he goeth to God, for he knoweth not what elſe to make his condition, as the prodigal ſon doth, *Luke* 15. 17. 18. And, it may be, here he reſolveth what to ſpeak: but readily things do vary when he is fixed before God, as the prodigal ſon forgot ſome of his premeditated prayers, *Luke* 15. 18, 19 21. And now, when he cometh before God more obſervably than ever before, (1.) He beginneth with the publican afar off, *Luke* 18. 13. with many through-confeſſions and ſelf-condemnings, whereof he is very prodigal, as *Luke* 16. 21. *I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy, &c.* (2.) Now begin his thoughts anent the hearing of his prayer, which he was not wont to queſtion much, he now knows what theſe expreſſions of the Saints anent the hearing of their prayers, do import. (3.) It is obſervable in this addreſſe, that there are many broken ſentences, like that of *Pſal.* 6. 3. (*But thou O Lord, how long?*) ſupplied with ſighs and groans, *Rom* 8 26. And greedy looking upward; thereby ſpeaking more than can be well expreſt by word. (4.) There be ordinarily ſome interruptions, and (as it were) diverſions, the man ſpeaking ſometimes to the enemie, ſometimes to his own heart, ſometimes to ȳ multitude in the world, as *David* doth in other caſes, *Pſal.* 9. 6. *Pſal.* 42. 5. *Pſal.* 4. 2. (5.) It is obſervable here, that ſometimes the man will halt and be ſilent to hear ſome indiſtinct whiſpring of a joyful ſound glancing on the mind or ſome news in ſome broken word of Scripture

which

which, it may be, the man ſcarcely knows to be Scripture, or whether it is come from God or Satan to delude him; yet this he hath reſolved, only to hear what God the Lord will ſpeak, as upon another occaſion, *Pſal.* 85. 8 (6.) More diſtinct promiſes come into the mans mind, whereupon he eſſayeth to lay hold, but it is beaten off with objections, as in another caſe the pſalmiſt is *Pſal.* 22. 3. 6. *But thou art holy*, *But*, I *am a worm*. Now it is about the dawning of the day with the man, and faith will ſtir aſſoon as the Lord imparteth the joyful ſound, *Pſal.* 89. 15. This is the ſubſtance of the Covenant, which may be ſhortly ſummed up in theſe words, *Chriſt Jeſus is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him.* We can ſpeak no further of the mans exerciſe, as a preparatory work; for, what followeth is more than preparatory. Yet, that the exerciſe may appear compleat and full, we ſhall adde here, That after all theſe things, the Lord (it may be, after many anſwers of divers ſorts mightily conveyeth the ſound of his Covenant to the heart, and determineth the heart to cloſe with it, and God now draweth to to Chriſt *Joh.* 6. 44. And ſo ſhapeth out the heart for him, that the conception cannot miſcarry: for now the heart is ſo in breadth and length for him, as that leſſe cannot ſatisfie, and more is not deſired, like that of *Pſal.* 73. 24. *whom have I in heaven but thee? or, whom have I deſired on earth beſide thee?* The ſoul now reſolveth to die, (if he commanded ſo) yet at his door, and facing to him-wards.

We have drawn this preparatory work to ſome length,

length, not tying any man to such a work so circumstantiat; only, we say, the Lord dealeth so with some; and where he so convinceth of sin, corruption and self-emptiness, and maketh a man take salvation to heart, as the one thing necessary and setteth him on work in the use of the means, which God hath appointed for relief; I say, such a work rarely shall be found to fail of a good issue and gracious result.

Object. *Hypocrites and reprobates have great stirrings of Conscience, and deep convictions about sin, setting them on work sometimes, and I do suspect any preparatory work of the Law I ever had, to be but such as they have.*

A. It will be hard to give sure essential differences between the preparatory work in those, in whom afterwards Christ is formed, and those legal stirrings, which are sometimes in reprobates: If there were not some gracious result of these convictions and wakenings of conscience in the Lords People, and other marks, (of which we shall speak afterwards) it were hard to adventure upon any differences that is clear in these legal stirrings. Yet, for answer to the Objection, I shall offer some things which rarely will be found in the stirrings of reprobates, and which are ordinarily found in that Law-work, which hath a gracious issue. (1.) The convictions of hypocrites and reprobates, are usually confined to some few very grosse transgressions, *Saul* grants no more but the persecuting of *David*, 1 *Sam.* 26. 21. *Judas* grants only the betraying of innocent blood, *Matth.* 7. 4.

But

But uſually theſe convictions, by which the Lord prepareth his own way in the ſoul, although they may begin at one or moe groſs particular tranſgreſſions, yet they fiſt not, but the man is led on to ſee many breaches of the Law, and innumerable evils compaſſing him as *David* ſpeaketh in the ſight of his ſin, *Pſal.* 40. 12. and withal, that univerſal conviction (if I may call it ſo) is not general, as uſually we hear ſenſleſs men ſaying, I in all things they ſin: But it is particular and condeſcending, as *Paul* afterwards ſpake of himſelf, he not only is the chief of ſinners, but particularly he was a *blaſphemer, a perſecuter.* 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. (2.) The convictions which hypocrits have, do ſeldom reach their corruption, and that body of death, which breeds an averſneſs from that which is good, and ſtrongly inclineth to what is evil. Ordinarily where we find hypocrits ſpeaking of themſelves in Scripture, they ſpeak loftily and with ſome ſelf conceit, both as to their freedom from corruption, *Joh.* 9. 34. The Phariſees ſay to the poor man, *Thou waſt altogether born in ſins, and doſt thou teach us?* (as if they themſelves were not as corrupt by nature as he) They ſpeak of great ſins as *Hazael* did 2 *Kings* 8. 13. *Am I a dog that I ſhould do this great thing?* And alſo in their undertakings of duty, as that man ſpake, *Matth.* 8. 19. *I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt.* See how the people do ſpeak, *Jer.* 42. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. They undertake to do all that God will command them. So that they ſtill go about in any caſe to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, not ſubmitting to the righ-

righteousnes of God. But I may say, That convictions and exercise about corruption, and that body of death, inclining to evil, and disenabling for good, is not the least part of the work, where the Lord is preparing his own way. They use to judge themselves very wretched, because of a body of sin, and are at their wits end, how to be delivered, as *Paul* speaketh when he is under the exercise of it afterwards, *Rom.* 7. 19. (3.) It will ordinarily be found, that the convictions which are in hypocrites, either are not so serious, as that some other businesse will not put them out of head before any satisfaction be gotten, as in *Cain*, who went and built a City, and we hear no more of his convictions, *Gen.* 4. *Felix* went away until a more convenient time, and we hear no more of his trembling *Acts* 24 25. Or if that work become very serious then it runneth to the other extremity and despair of relief, leaving no room for any outgate. So we find *Judas* very serious in his convictions, yet he grew desperat and hanged himself, *Matth.* 27. 4. 5. But where the Lord prepareth His own way, the work is both so serious, as the person cannot be put off it, (untill he find some satisfaction) and yet under that very seriousnes he lieth open for relief; both which are clear in the Jaylors words, *What shal I do to be saved? Acts* 16. 30. This serious enquiry after relief, is a very observable thing in the preparatory work which leadeth on to Christ, Yet, we desire none to lay too much weight on these things, since God hath allowed clear differences between the precious and the vile.

Object.

Object. *I still fear I have not had so through a sight of my sin and misery, as the Lord giveth to many whom He effectually calleth, especially to great transgressours, such as I am.*

A. It is true, the Lord discovereth to some, great sights of their sin and misery, and they are thereby put under great legal terrours. But as all are not brought in by that sensible preparatory Law work (as we shew before) So even those who are dealt with after that way, are very differently and variously exercised in regard of degrees of terrour, and of continuance of that work; The Jaylor hath a violent work of very short continuance; *Paul* hath a work continuing three dayes: Some persons are in bondage through fear of death all their dayes, *Heb.* 2. so that we must not limit the Lord to one way of working here. The main thing we are to look unto in these legal waknings and convictions of sin and misery, is, If the Lord reach those ends in us, for which usually these stirrings and convictions are sent into the soul; and if those ends be reached, it is well, we are not to vex our selves about any preparatory work further. Now, those ends which God driveth ordinarily with sinners by these legal terrours and wakenings of conscience, are four. First, The Lord discovers sight of mens sin and misery to them, to chase them out of themselves, and to put them out of conceit of their own righteousnes. Men naturally have great thoughts of themselves, and do incline much to the Covenant of works. The Lord therefore doth discover to them so much of their sin and corruption,

tion, even in their best things, that they are mad
to loath themselves, and to despair of relief
themselves, and so they are forced to flee out
themselves, and from the Covenant of works,
seek refuge elsewhere, *Heb* 6.18. They become dea
to themselves and the Law, as to the point of j
stification, *Rom.*7.4. Then have they no more co
fidence in the flesh, *Phil.*3.3. This is supponed
the offers of Christs coming to seek and save tha
which was lost, *Luke* 19.10. and to be a Physicia
to those who are sick, *Mat.*9.12. The second grea
End, is, to commend Christ Jesus to mens Hear
above all things, that so they may fall in love wit
him, and betake themselves to ỹ treasure & jew
which only encricheth, *Mat.*13.44 and by so doin
may serve the Lords designe in the contrivemen
of the Gospel, which was the manifestation of Hi
free grace through Christ Jesus, in the salvation o
men. The sight of a mans own misery and dam-
nable estate by nature, is a ready way to make hi
prize Christ highly, who alone can set such
wretch at liberty. Yea it not only leadeth a man to
an high esteem of Christ, but also of all things tha
relate to that way of salvation, as Grace, New-Co-
venant Faith, &c. and makes him carefully to
gather & treasure up his *Michtams* or golden Scrip
tures, for the confirmation of his interest in thes
things. The third great end is, To deter and scar
people from sin, and to make them cast out with it,
and consent to put their neck under all His yoke.
God kindleth some sparks of hell in mens bosoms
by the discovery of their sin, as a ready mean to
make

make them henceforth ſtand in awe, knowing how bitter a thing it is to depart from ỹ Lord, *Jer.* 2.19. So we find reſt offered to the weary, upon condition they will take on Chriſts yoke, *Mat.* 11.29. And God offereth to owne men, as their God & Father, upon condition they wil allow no peaceable abode to *Belial*, 2 *Cor.* 6.14. 17, 18. The fourth great end, is, To work up men to a patient & thankfull ſubmiſſion to all the Maſters pleaſure. This is a ſingular piece of work, *Ezek.* 16.63. Then ſhalt thou *not open thy mouth any more.* The ſight of a mans own vileneſſe and deſervings, maketh him ſilent, and to lay his hand on his mouth whatſoever God doth unto him, *Pſal.* 39. 9. *I was dumb and opened not my mouth; becauſe thou didſt it.* Ezra 9.13 *God hath puniſhed us leſſe than our iniquities.* Micah 7. 9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned.* The man careth not what God doth to him, or how he deal with him, if He ſave him from the deſerved wrath to come. Alſo, any mercy is a large mercy to him, who hath ſeen ſuch a ſight of himſelf *Gen.* 32 10. he is leſſe then the leaſt of mercies: any crum falling from the Maſters table is welcom, *Mat.* 15. 27. he thinks it rich mercy that he is not conſumed, *Lam.* 3.22. This is the thing that marvelouſly maketh his poor croſſed people ſo ſilent under, and ſatisfied with their lot; Nay, they think he deſerveth hell who openeth his mouth at any thing God doth to him, ſince he hath pardoned his tranſgreſſions. So then, for ſatisfying the Objection, I ſay, If the Lord hath driven thee out of thy ſelf, & commended Chriſt to thy heart above all things,

and

and made thee resolve on his strength to wage war with every known transgression, and thou art in some measure, as a weaned child, acquiescing in what He doth unto thee, desiring to lay thy hand on thy mouth thankfully. Then thy convictions of sin and misery, and whatsoever thou dost plead as a preparatory work, is sufficient, and thou art to debate no more anent it; only be advised to study new discoveries of the sense of thy lost condition every day, because of thy old and new sins, & also to see fresh help in Christ, who is a Priest for ever to make intercession, & to have the work of Sanctification & patience ẇ thankfulness, renewed & quickned often, for somewhat of that work, which abaseth thee, exalteth Christ, and conformeth to his Will, must convey thee throughout all thy lifetime in this World.

We come now to speak of some more clear & sure marks, by which men may take up their gracious state & interest in Christ. The first thing whereby men may know it, is. their closing with Christ in the Gospel, wherein he is held forth. This is believing, or faith, which is ẏ condition of the Covenant, *Rom.* 4. 16. It is of faith, &c. *Act.* 16. 31. *Believe--- and thou shalt be saved.* Now altho in propriety of speech, it is hard to prove an interest by faith, it being our very interest in him; yet the hearts closing ẇ Christ Jesus, is so discernable in it self, ẏ we may well place it amongst ẏ marks of a gracious state: And if a man can make out this, ẏ he believeth on, & in Christ Jesus, he thereby doth prove a very true interest in him. Many

do

do fear at this, as a mark, upon one of these three grounds ordinarily: (1.) Some conceive Faith to be a difficult mysterious thing, hardly attainable. To these, I say, Do not mistake; faith is not so difficult as many do apprehend it to be, I grant true faith in the meanest degree, is ȳ gift of God, & above ȳ power of flesh & blood: for God must draw men to Christ, *Phil.* 1.29. *Joh.* 9.44. Yet it were a reflection upon Christ, & all he hath done, to say, it were a matter of insuperable difficulty, as is clear, *Rom.* 10.6. ... 11 it were, according to ȳ Scripture, as much upon ȳ matter, as to say, Christ came not from heaven, is not risen from the dead, or ascended victorious to heaven. I say, he hath made the way to Heaven most easie; and Faith, which is the condition required on our part, is more easie than men do imagine. For ȳ better understanding of this, consider, ȳ justifying faith is not to believe ȳ *I* am elected, or, to believe that God loveth me, or ȳ Christ died for me, or ȳ like. These things are indeed very difficult & almost impossible at the first hand to be won at by those who are serious, whilest natural Atheists, & deluded Hypocrits, find no difficulty in asserting all those things. I say, true justifying faith is not any of the foresaid things; neither is it simply the believing of any sentence that is written, or ȳ can be thought upon. I grant, he that believeth on Christ Jesus, believeth what God said anent mans sinful, miserable condition by nature, and he believeth that to be true, that there is Life in the Son, who was Slain, and is risen again from the

the dead, &c. But none of these, nor the believing of many such truths, do speak out justifying faith, or that believing on the Son of God spoken of in Scripture: for, then it were simply an act of ỹ understanding. But true justifying faith, which we now seek after, as a good mark of interest in Christ, is chiefly and principally an act or work of the heart & will, having presuppoled sundry things about truth in the understanding, with the heart it is believed unto salvation, *Rom.* 10.10. & although it seem (*vers.* 9. of that Chapter) that a man is saved upon condition that he believe this truth, God *raised Christ from the dead*; yet we must understand another thing there. and *vers* 10. than the believing the truth of that proposition: For, beside that all devils have that faith whereby they believe that God raised Christ from the dead; So the Scripture hath clearly resolved justifying faith into a receiving of Christ, *Joh.* 1.12. The receiving of Christ is there explained to be ỹ believing on his name. It is still called a staying on the Load, *Isa.* 26.3. trusting in God, often mentioned in the *Psalms*, and the word is a leaning on him. It is a believing on Christ, *Joh.* 6.29. and often so expressed in the New Testament. When God maketh men believe savingly, He is said to draw them unto Christ; and when the Lord inviteth thẽ to believe, he calleth them to come to him *Joh.* 6.37.44. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man finding a jewel, wherewith he falleth in love, *Matth.* 13 44 45 46. Now I say, this acting of the heart on Christ Jesus, is not so difficult a thing, as is conceived. Shal that be

judged

judged a mysterious difficult thing which doth consist much in desire? If men have but an appetite, they have it; for they are blessed that hunger after righteousness *Matth.*5.6. If you will, you are welcome, *Rev* 22.17. Is it a matter of such intricacy and insuperable difficulty, greedily to look to that exalted Saviour, *Isa.* 45.22. and to receive a thing that is offered, held forth, and declared to be mine, if I will but accept and take it, & in a manner open my mouth & give way to it, Such a thing is faith, *Psal* 81.10, 11. it not lesse. Oh if I could perswade people what is justifying faith which impropriateth Christ to me! We often scar people from their just rest & quiet, by making them apprehend faith to be some deep mysterious thing and by moving unnecessary doubts about it, whereby it is needlesly darkened. (2) Some make no use of this mark, as judging it a high presumptuous crime to pretend to so excellent a thing as is every condition of the new Covenant. To these, I say, you need not startle so much at it, as if it were high pride to pretend to it: for, whatsoever true faith be, men must resolve to have it, or nothing at all; all other marks are in vain without it; a thousand things besides will not do the business: Unless a man believe he abideth in the state of condemnation, 1 *Joh* 3.18, 36. (3) Others do not meddle with this noble mark of faith, because they judge it a work of greatest difficulty, to finde out faith where it is. To these, I say, It is not so difficult to find it out since he that believeth, hath the witnesse in himself,

 1 *Joh.* 5.10.

1 *Joh.* 5. 10. It is a thing which by some serious search may be known. Not only may we do much to find it out by ỹ preparatory work going before it in many: as the apprehending and believing of a mans lost estate, and that he cannot do his own businesse, and that there is satisfying fulnesse in Christ, very desirable, if he could overtake it; A serious minding of this, with a heart laid open for relief; As also, by the ordinary companions & concomitants of it, *viz.* the liking of Christs dominion, His Kingly and Prophetical Office, a desire to resign my self wholly up to him to be at his disposing: As also by the native consequences of it, *viz.* the assoyling of the Word, the assoyling of my own conscience according to the Word, a heart purifying work, a working by love, &c. I say, not only may we know faith by these things, but it is discernable by it self and of its own nature; although I deny not, but there must be some help of Gods spirit, by which we know what is freely given unto us of God, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. As also, that God hath allowed many evidences and marks as precious helps, whereby men may clear up faith more fully to themselves, 1 *Joh* 5. 13. Yet I still say, that Faith or believing, which is some acting of the heart upon Christ in the Gospel, & ỹ transacting with Him there, is discernable of it self, and by it self, to a judicious understanding person, with an ordinary influence of the Spirit; unlesse the Lord, for reasons known to Himself do over-cloud a mans reflex light, by which he should take up and perceive what is in Him.

This

This justifying Faith, which we assert to be so discernable, is, in the Lords deep wisdom & gracious condescendency, variously expresst in Scripture, according to ỹ differenr actings of it upon God and outgoings after him, so as every one, who hath it, may find and take it up in his own mould. It sometimes acteth by a desire of union with Him in Christ; This is that *looking* to Him, *Isa.* 45 22. This seems to be a weak act of Faith, & far below other actings of it at other times, perhaps in that same person. Men will look to what they dar not approach (to their apprehension) which they dar not touch or imbrace. They may look to one, to whom they dare not speak. Yet God hath made the promise to faith in that acting, as the forecited Scripture doth shew; and this He hath done mercifully and wisely for this is the only discernable way of the acting of faith of some persons sometimes: such are the actings or outgoings of faith expresst in Scripture by *hungring and thirsting after righteousnesse. Mat.* 5 6. and that expresst by *willing*, *Rev.* 22.7. Again, this faith goeth out sometimes in ỹ act of recumbency or leaning on the Lord, the soul taking up Christ then as a resting stone: and God hath so held him out, although he be a stumbling-stone to others, *Rom* 9 33. This acting of it, is hinted in the expressions of *trusting* and *staying* on God; so often mentioned in Scripture; & precious promises are made to this acting of faith, as *Isa.* 26. 3,4. *God will keep them in perfect peace whose minds are stayed on him*; because such do trust in Him. *Trust in the Lord*; *for with him is everlasting strength.*

So *Ps.* 125. 1. *They that trust in the Lord shal be as mount Zion, which abideth for ever.* I say, the Lord hath made promises to this way of faiths acting, as knowing it will often go out after Him in this way often w many persons, & this way of its acting will be most discernable to them. It goeth out after God sometimes by an act of waiting, when the soul hath somewhat depending before God, and hath not got out his mind satisfyingly anent that thing: then faith doth wait, and so it hath the promise, *Isa.* 49. 23. Sometimes it acteth in a wilful way upon the Lord, when the soul apprehendeth God thrusting it away and threatning its ruine, So *Job.* 13. 15. *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.* The faith of that poor woman, *Matth.* 15. 22. 28. so highly commended by Christ, did go out in this way of wilful acting over difficulties; & the Lord speaketh much good of it, and to it, because some wil be put to it, to exercise faith that way sometimes, and so they have that for their encouragment. It were tedious to instance all the several wayes of the acting of faith upon, and its exercise about, and out going after Christ. I may say, according to ẏ various conditions and pressures of the soul of man, the Lord hath variously held out Himself and his fulnesse in Christ under divers notions, as might most fitly meet the distresse and condition of man, & accordingly, *Faith*, which God hath appointed to traffick and travel between Christ and man, as the instrument of conveyance of His fulness unto man of & maintaining union & communion with him acteth variously & differently upon God in Christ so

ſor, faith is the very ſhaping out of a mans heart according to Gods device of ſalvation by Chriſt Jeſus, in whom it pleaſed the Father that fulneſſe ſhould dwel, ſo that let Chriſt turn what way he will, faith airteth and poimeth that way. Now, He turneth all wayes in which he can be uſefull to poor man, & therefore faith acteth accordingly on Him for drawing out of that fulneſſe, according to a mans caſe & condition. As for example, the ſoul is naked, deſtitute of a covering to keep it from the ſtorm of Gods wrath; Chriſt is fine rayment, *Rev.* 3. 17. 18. Then accordingly faiths work here is to put on the Lord Jeſus, *Gal.* 3. 27. The ſoul is hungry & thirſty after ſomewhat y may everlaſtingly ſatisfie. Chriſt Jeſus is milk, wine, water, the bread of life, and the true manna, *Iſa.* 55. 1, 2 *Joh* 6. 48. 51. He is the feaſt of fat things, & of wine refined, *Iſa.* 25. 6. Then the work and exerciſe of faith is to go buy, eat & drink abundantly, *Iſa.* 55. 1. *Joh* 6. 53. 57 The ſoul is purſued for guilt more or leſſe and is not law-biding: Chriſt Jeſus is the City of refuge and the high Prieſt there, during whole lifetime (that is for ever) the poor man, who wins thither, is ſafe. Then the exerciſe and work of faith is, to flee thither for refuge, to lay hold on the hope ſet before us, *Heb* 6. 18 In a word, whatſoever way he can benefit poor man, ſo he ſpeaketh of himſelf & as he holdeth out himſelf in y Scripture, ſo faith doth point towards him. If he be a bridgroom, faith will go out in a marriage relation; If He be a father, faith pleadeth y man to be a child: If he be a ſhepherd;

faith pleads the man may be one of His sheep; If He be a Lord, faith calleth Him so, which none can do but by the *Spirit* of Jesus; If He be dead and risen again for our justification, faith believeth God hath raised him on that account, *Rom.* 10. 9. Wheresoever he be, there would faith be; and whatsoever He is, faith would be somewhat proportionally. For by Faith the heart is shapen out in breadth and length for him: Yea, when the fame and report of him goeth abroad in His Truth although faith see not much, yet it believeth on His Name, upon the very fame He hath sent abroad of Himself, *Joh.* 1. 12.

But here for avoiding of mistakes, consider (1.) That although justifying Faith acteth so variously, yet every believer, who hath a good title to Christ Jesus, hath not all these various actings and exercises of faith; for, his condition craveth them not; and also the Master is pleased not to lead out the faith of some persons at some times in some of these wayes, (for reasons known to himself) even when their necessity (to their apprehension) calleth for such actings of fairh. Surely, every one dare not say, *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him.* Many would not have gone upwith ye woman I spake of, *Mat.* 15 but would have been discouraged and quit the pursuit. It is on this account that Christ doth highly command the faith of some, beyond the faith of others, *Mat.* 8. 10. *Matth.* 15. 28. Many good people are much disquieted anent their faith, because it goeth not out in all those wayes we find recorded in Scripture: But there is hardly

hardly any man will be found whoſe faith hath acted all theſe wayes. (2.) Many of theſe actings of faith are much intended and remitted. They are ſometimes ſtrong and vigoreus, and diſcernable, and ſometimes they fail, and mishelief doth prevail ſo, as it were an uncertain thing to judge of a mans ſtate by theſe. We find the Saints very different from themſelves in regard of the actings of faith ſometimes, as we ſhew before. (3.) Each one of theſe actings of faith, ſpeaketh good to the perſon in whom it is, and hath promiſes annexed unto it, as we have ſaid. Yet, (4.) although theſe actings of faith have promiſes annexed unto them, they are not, for that, the condition of the new Covenant: for then every one behoved to have each one of them: which is not true, as we ſaid before. A promiſe is made to him who overcometh but perſeverance is not the condition of the new Covenant, but doth ſuppone it. There are promiſes made to the exerciſe of all graces in Scripture; but only, faith is the condition of the Covenant. I ſay then, theſe promiſes are made to theſe actings of faith, not as ſuch, but as they do ſuppone juſtifying faith, which is the condition of the Covenant. All theſe are actings of faith, but not as it is juſtifying. Therefore, (5.) there is ſome what common to all gracious perſons which may be ſupponed by all the foreſaid actings of faith wherein the nature and eſſence of juſtifying faith ſtandeth; & this is the hearts ſatisfaction anent Gods device of ſalvation by Chriſt; when man pleaſeth Gods invention of ſatisfaction to juſtice

through Christ Jesus, in whom all fulnes doth dwel now by the Fathers pleasure; when the soul and heart of man acquiesceth in that, then it believeth unto salvation. As at first the Lord made man suitable to the Covenant of Works, by creating him perfect, & so putting him in a capacity to perform his will in that Covenant. So under the New Covenant, when God giveth the new heart to man, he setteth the *Idea* and stamp of all his device in the Covenant upon the man, so as there is a consonancy to Gods will there: Thus he beareth the image of the second *Adam*, Christ Jesus on him. This is a great part of the new heart, and is most opposed to works; Since now the man absolutely falleth off works, becoming dead to the Law (as to the point of justification) by the body of Christ *Rom.* 7. 4. Man perceiving, that God hath devised a way of satisfying Divine Justice, and recovering lost man by the Incarnation of Christ, he thinks this so good and sure a way, that he absolutely giveth up with the Law, as I said before, and closeth with this device: and this is believing, or faith; very opposite to works, and all resting thereupon; This cannot fail to be in all gracious persons, in whom many of the actings of faith are found. This doth clearly suppone known distresse in a man, without all relief in himself; This supponeth known fulnesse in Christ, as the alone sufficient relief: This imports a sort of impropriation for ỹ heart, pleasing that device, in so far swayeth towards it. This is a thing clearly supponed in al the

actings

actings of faith, spoken of before. He that greedily hungereth, hath this; and he that leaneth, hath this; and he that putteth on Christ, hath this, &c. This is to esteem Christ the wisdom and power of God to salvation; So is he said to be to all that believe 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. They esteem that device wise and sure, beseeching God, and that is to believe. On this account Christ, who is the rejected stone to many, is *precious to them who believe*; a fit stone to recover, fortify and beautifie the tottering building and fabrick of lost man, 1 *Pet.* 1. The Kingdom of God is like a man finding a treasure, for which with joy he selleth all, *Mat.* 13. 44. These words hold out the very way of believing, *viz.* Salvation is discovered in the Gospel to be by Christ; the heart valueth that invention as satisfying. This is to believe on the Son of God lifted up, which is compared with the looking to the brasen Serpent, *Joh.* 3. 14. It was mans approbation of that device which made it effectual for his healing. So it is here: he that so believeth, setteth to his seal that God is true. True, wherein? In that record he hath born, that God hath provided life for men, and placed it all in Christ, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. 11. *He that believeth not, maketh God a liar.* Wherein? In his saying that Christ is a safe and sure way to heaven This is the pleasing and acquiescing in that device and it is consonant to all I know, spoken of justifying faith in Scripture. This is the believing on Christ and on his Name, the receiving of him and resting on him for salvation, in our Catechism. The believing that Jesus is the Christ, that is,

the Anointed One, whom the Father hath ſealed, and ſet apart, and qualified for the work of reconciling man unto God; and *he that believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God*; 1 *Joh.* 5. 1. This is to believe with the heart *that God hath raiſed Chriſt from the dead.* The man believeth Chriſt died, and is raiſed on the account of ſatisfaction for mans tranſgreſſion; Devils may believe that. Nay, but the man I ſpeake of, *believeth it with his heart*, (which no natural man doth, until a new heart be given him) that is, he cordially pleaſeth, is ſatisfied with, and acquieſceth in this noble invention. And this faith layeth out it ſelf now and than in its actings, out-goings, and exerciſe, according to all the Covenant-relations, under which Chriſt is held forth in the Scripture.

Now, I ſay, This faith is diſcernable, not only in theſe actings many times; a man may know if his heart doth hunger after Chriſt, and flee for refuge to him, when purſued, and if he doth commit himſelf unto God, &c. But alſo in its very nature, as it is juſtifying, it is diſcernable and may be known; A man may clearly know, if from known diſtreſſe in himſelf upon the report and fame of Chriſts fulneſſe, his heart doth pleaſe Gods device in the New Covenant, if it goeth out after Chriſt in that invention and pleaſeth him as Lord of the life of men, terminating and reſting there, & no where elſe, acquieſcing in that contrivement w desire & complacency. This is a diſcernable thing. Therefore I obteſt men impartially to examine thēſelves, and if they find that their heart is cloſed ſo with

that

that device of ſalvation, and is gone out after him as precious, that thereupon they conclude a ſure and true intereſt in Chriſt Jeſus, & a good claim & title to the crown, ſince *he that believeth ſhal never periſh, but have everlaſting life*, John 3. 16. 36.

Object. *Hypocrites and Reprobates have a ſort of faith, and are ſaid to believe*, Joh. 2. 23. Acts 8. 13. *and cannot chooſe but go out after Chriſt, and that device of Salvation, when they hear of it: and they profeſs they do ſo, yet are deluded and ſo may I be.*

A To ſay nothing of that thought of your heart [whereby you wonder that any man ſhould not pleaſe the device of ſalvation by Chriſt, and lead out towards him] as a very promiſing thing and ſpeaking out juſtifying faith to be in their boſom; and, to ſay nothing in contradiction to that which you think. That a natural man, whilſt ſuch, and before he get a new heart, can pleaſe that device, and believe with his heart and affectionatly, that which perfectly overthroweth the Covenant of Works, and abaſeth man in the point of ſelf righteouſneſſe already attained, or that can be won at by him, which is inconſiſtent with many Scriptural truths. I offer theſe differences between the faith of all hypocrites or Reprobates, and that true ſaving juſtifying faith, whereof we have ſpoken, (1.) They never cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus (in that device) and him alone as a ſufficient covering of the eyes, as is ſaid of *Abraham* to *Sarah* Gen. 20. 16. They ſtill hold faſt ſome what of their own, at leaſt to help to procure Gods favour

and

and ſalvation: Their heart doth ſtill ſpeak, as that young mans ſpeech, *Luke* 18. 18, 21. doth inſinuate, What want I that I may inherite life? Beſide that they do ſtill retain their former lovers, and will not break their Covenants with hell & death, imagining they may have Chriſt with theſe things equally ſharing in their heart, contrary to that, *A man cannot ſerve two maſters*, *Matth.* 6. 24. Either Chriſt muſt be judged abſolute Lord, and worthy to be ſo, or nothing at all. And ſo it is clear, their heart is not ſhapen-out for that device of ſalvation by Chriſt, whom God hath alone made Lord here, in whom all fulneſſe ſhall dwell. But where juſtifying faith is, the ſoul of a man and his heart doth cloſe with Chriſt, and him alone, having no confidence in the fleſh, *Phil.* 3. 3. *Pſal* 62. 5. he truſteth only in God. Alſo the man here giveth up with other lovers, as they compete with Chriſt, They reſolve not to be for another, *Hoſ.* 3. 3. They call him *Lord*, which a man can only do by the Spirit of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 12. 3. (2.) As hypocrites and reprobats do never cloſe with Chriſt alone; ſo they do never cloſe wth full Chriſt as he is anointed to be a King to rule over a man in all things; a Prieſt, to procure pardon, and to make peace for man upon all occaſions; a Prophet, to be wiſdom and a teacher and counſellor in all caſes to man. So they do not receive Chriſt, eſpecially in the firſt and third Office. But where true juſtifying faith is, a man cloſeth with whole Chriſt in all his Offices, judging all his will, good, holy, juſt and ſpiritual, *Rom.* 7. 12. and right concerning all things,

Pſal.

Pſal. 119. 128. making mention of his righteouſneſſe only, *Pſal.* 71. 16. The man alſo giveth up himſelf to be taught of him, *Matth.* 11. 29. So that Chriſt is made to the true Believer with his own conſent, wiſdom, righteouſneſſe, ſanctification and compleat Redemption, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. And although he hath not all theſe things formally in exerciſe when his heart goeth out after Chriſt, yet, upon ſearch and tryal, it will be found with him, as I have ſaid. (3.) Hypocrites and Reprobates do never cloſe with Chriſt, and all the inconveniencies may follow him; they ſtick at that with that man, *Mat.* 8. 19, 20. But where true juſtifying faith is, a man doth cloſe with him on all hazards; he reſolveth to forgo all rather than to forgo Chriſt, *Mark* 10. 28. he reckoneth all to be loſſe and dung for the excellency of Chriſt Jeſus, as his Lord, and to be found in him, *Phil.* 3 8. We might give other differences alſo, As that true faith is operative purifying the heart, *Act.* 15 9. working by love, *Gal.* 5. 6. whileſt hypocrites do only cleanſe the outſide of the platter, *Matth* 23 25. and do all to be ſeen of men, *Mat.* 6. 5. not ſeeking the honour that is of God only, and ſo cannot believe, *Joh* 5. 44. We might alſo ſhew that true faith is never alone in a man, but attended with other ſaving graces: But becauſe theſe things will co-incide with ẏ followeth, & here we are ſhewing ẏ a man may take up his gracious ſtate by his faith and the actings thereof on Chriſt, we paſſe theſe things.

The ſecond great work of a gracious ſtate and true ſaving intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, is, The new creature

creature, 2 *Cor.* 5.17. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.* This new creation or renovation of that man, is a very sensible change, although not in those who are effectually called from the womb, or in their younger years; because those have had this new creature from that time in them so as this change in after period of time is not discernable; yet in those who have been regenerated and brought in to Christ after they were come to greater age, and so have more palpably been under the power of darkness before they were translated into the Kingdom of Christ, *Col.* 1.13. But in all who do warrantably pretend to Christ; this new creature must be, although some do not know experimentally the contraries of every part of it, so as others do, because they have not been equally, in regard of practice, under the power of darkness. This new creature is called *the new man*, *Gal.* 3.10. which doth hold out the extent of it. It is not simply a new tongue, or new hand, but *a new man*. There is a principle of new life and motion put in the man, which is the new heart: which new principle of life sendeth forth acts of life, or of conformity to the image of him who created it, *Col.* 3 10. So as the party is renewed in some measure every way. The renovation of the man who is in Christ, may be reduced into these two great heads.

First, There is a renovation of the mans person, soul and body, in some measure. (1) His understanding is renewed so as he judgeth Christ preached in the Gospel to be the wisdom and power of God, a wise, strong device beseeming God, 1 *Cor.* 1.23,24.

1.23,24. He knoweth the things of God really and ſolidly, not to be yea and nay, and uncertain fancies, but all to be *yea* and *amen*, ſolid, certain, ſubſtantiall things, having a deſirable accompliſhment in Chriſt, and reſolving much in him, 1 *Cor.* 2.15. 2 *Cor.* 1.18. Natural men, educated under Goſpel-ordinances, although they have ſome notionall knowledge of God, Chriſt, Promiſes, the motions of the Holy Spirit, &c. ſo as they may confer, preach and diſpute of theſe things; yet they look on them, as common received maxims of Chriſtianity, from which to recede were a ſingularity & diſgrace; but not as real, ſolid ſubſtantial truths, ſo as to adventure their ſouls & everlaſting being on them. The underſtanding is renewed alſo to take up ſomewhat of God in the creatures, as bearing ſparks of his glorious Attributes, *Pſ.* 19.1. They ſee the heavens declaring his glory and power, and ſomewhat of God in providence and diſpenſations that fall out: *His wondrous works declare that his Name is near*, Pſal. 75.1. The underſtanding alſo taketh up the conditions & caſes of the ſoul otherwayes than it was wont to do; As we find the Saints uſually ſpeaking in Scripture, *O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, &c.* Pſal. 16. 2. *My ſoul ſaid, thy face will I ſeek.* Pſal. 27. 8. *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul?* Pſal. 42. 5. Pſal. 43. 5. *Return unto thy reſt, O my ſoul;* Pſal. 116. 7. (2.) The heart and affections are renewed. The heart is made a new heart, a heart of fleſh, capable of impreſſions, having a copy of his Law ſtamped on it, and fear of God put into it, whereby

whereby the mans duty becometh in a manner native and kindly to the man, *Jer.* 32.39,40. *Ezek.* 36.26. It was before a heart of stone, void of the fear of God. The affections are renewed now. The love is renewed in some good measure: it goeth out after God, *I will love the Lord, Psal.* 18. 1. after his Law, *O how I love thy Law, Psal.* 119. 97 after those who have Gods image in them, *Joh.* 13. 35. 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. This love to Gods People is upon a pure account, as they are the children of God, and do keep his Statutes, 1 *Pet.* 1 22. It is with a pure heart, *Psalm* 119. 63. and therefore it goeth towards all such, whom the man knoweth or apprehendeth to be such, *Psal.* 119 63. *I am a companion to all them, &c.* in all cises and conditions, even where there is nothing to beautifie or commend, but the Image of God. And this love is so fervent many times, 1 *Pet.* 1. 22. that it putteth it self out in all relations, so as a man seeketh a godly wife, a godly master, a godly servant, a godly counsellor, if he have to choose upon, *Psal.* 101. 6. and it is not quenched by many waters, *Cant.* 8. 7. many imperfections & infirmities, difference in opinion, wrongs received, will not altogether quench love. Also it is communicative of good according to its measure, and as the case of the poor godly requireth *Psal.* 16. 2. 1 *Joh* 3. 18,19. The mans hatred is also renewed, and is now bended against sin, *Psal.* 119. 113. *I hate vain thoughts*: against Gods enemies, as such, *Psal.* 139. 21,22 *Do not I hate them that hate thee? &c.* The joy or delight is renewed, for it runneth towards God, *Psal.* 73. 25. *Whom have I*

in

in heaven? &c. towards his Law and Will. *Psal.* 1. 2. *His delight is in the Law of the Lord.* And towards the Godly and their fellowship, *Psal.* 16. 3.---*in whom is all my delight.* The sorrow is turned against sin, which hath wronged Christ, *Zech.* 12. 10. *Looking to him whom they have pierced they mourn.* 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. The sorrow is godly there, and against what incroacheth upon Gods honour; they are sorrowfull for the----assemblies, and the reproach of that is their burden, *Zeph.* 3. 18. There is some renovation in all the affections, as in every other part of the soul pointing now towards God. (3.) The very outward members of the man are renewed, as the Scripture speaks, the tongue, the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot, &c. so that those members which once were improved as weapons of unrighteousnes unto sin, are now improved as weapons of righteousnes unto holiness, *Rom.* 6. 19.

Secondly, A man who is in Christ, is renewed in some measure in all his wayes. *Behold all things are new*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17 The man becometh new, (1.) In the way of His interest. He was upon any good before, though but apparent and at best but external, *Psal.* 4 6 But now his businesse and interest is, how to be found in Christ in that day, *Phil.* 3. 9. or, how to be forth-coming to Him and walk before him in the land of the living, *Psal* 56. 13. which he would choose among all ỹ mercies that fill this earth, *Psal.* 119. 64. The interest of Christ also becometh the mans interest, as appeareth in the song of *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 2. and in the song of *Mary*, *Luke* 1. It is strange to see people newly con-

converted, and having reached but the beginnings of knowledge, concern and interest themselves in the publick matters of Christs Kingdom so desirous to have Him riding prosperously and subduing the people under Him. (2.) The man that is in Christ, is renewed in the way of his worship. He was wont to serve God in ỹ oldness of the letter so, the fashion answering ỹ letter of the command in the outside of duty, which one in whom the old man hath absolute dominion can do: But now he worshippeth God in the newnesse of the Spirit, *Rom.* 7, 6. In a new way wherein he is helped by the Spirit of God, *Rom.* 8, 26. beyond the reach of flesh and blood. He serveth now the true & living God, 1 *Thess.* 1, 9. in spirit and in truth. *Joh.* 4. 24. having spirituall apprehensions of God, & engagements in his very soul in that work, doing & saying truly; and not feignedly when he worshipeth, still d firing to approach unto him as a living God, who heareth and seeth him, and can accept his service, *Psal.* 42. 1, 2. I grant, he fails of this many times; yet I may say, such worship he intendeth, and sometimes overtaketh, and doth not much reckon worship, which is not so performed unto God; and the iniquity of his holy things is not the least part of his burden, and exercise; Such a worship naturall men are strangers unto, whilest they bable-out their vain glorious boastings, *Luke* 18. 11. 12. to an unknown God, *Act.* 17. 23. (3.) The man that is in Christ, is renewed in the way of his outward calling and imployment in the world, he now resolveth to be about it, because God hath

hath commanded so *Rom.* 12. 11. and to eye God in it as the last end, doing it to His glory, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. and studieth to keep some enter-course with God in the exercise of his outward imployments, as *Jacob* doth in his latter-Will. *Gen* 49. 28. and *Nehemiah* did, *Nehem.* 2. 4. so as the man resolveth to walk with God, and set him alwayes before him, *Psal.* 16. 8. wherein I deny not he faileth often. (4.) He becometh new in the way of his relations; he becometh a more dutiful husband, father, brother, master, servant, neighbour, &c. herein doth he exercise himself to keep a conscience void of offence towards men, as well as towards God, *Act.* 24. 16 1 *Cor.* 9. 22. becoming all things to all men. (5.) He becometh new in the way of his lawfull liberties, he studieth to make use of meat, drink, sleep, recreations, apparrel with an eye to God, labouring not to come under the power of any lawfull thing. 1 *Cor* 6, 12. 13 nor to give offence to others in the use of these things, *Rom.* 14. 20. 21. *Rom.* 15. 1. nor using liberty as an occasion to the flesh, *Gal.* 5 13. yea, he laboureth to use all these things as a stranger on earth so as his moderation may appear, *Phi.* 4. 5. and some way he doth eye God as the last end in these things, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. doing all to the glory of God; So as we may say of that man, old things are much past away, all things are in some measure become new, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. He that is so a new creature, is undoubtedly in Christ.

This renovation of a man in a manner of conversation, and this being under Law to God in all things,

things, is that holineſſe, without which no man ſhal ſee God, *Heb.* 12. 14 Men may fancy things to themſelves, but unleſſe they ſtudy to approve themſelves unto God in all wel-pleaſing, and reach ſome inward teſtimony of ſincerity that way, they ſhal not aſſure their hearts before Him. The teſtimony of mens conſcience, is their rejoycing. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *By this we know that we know Him, if we keep his Commandments* 1 *Joh* 2. 3. 1 *Joh.* 3. 20, 21. No confidence if the heart condemn. This is the new creature having a principle of new ſpiritual life infuſed by God into the heart, whereby it becometh new and putteth forth acts of new life throughout the whole man, as we have ſaid, ſo as he is pointed towards the whole Law, both theſe commands which forbid ſin. So he reſolveth to ſet againſt ſecret ſins, not to lay a ſtumbling block before the blind; *Lev* 19. 14. Little ſins are judged ſo by many, the leaſt things of the Law. *Mat.* 5. 19. ſpiritual ſins, filthineſſe of the ſpirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1. ſins of omiſſion; as well as of cõmiſſion, ſince men are to be judged by theſe, *Mat.* 25. 42. 43, 44. yea, ſins that are winded-in into his natural humour and conſtitution, and ſo are as a right eye or hand to him, *Mat.* 5. 29 This new principle of life, by the good hand of God, maketh the man ſet againſt every known ſin, ſo far as not to allow peaceable abode to any known darkneſſe, 2 *Cor.* 6. 14. As alſo he is pointed towards thoſe Commands which relate to duty, and the quickning of grace in man. It maketh a man reſpect all known commands, *Pſ.* 119 6, to live godly, righteouſly & ſoberly, *Tit.* 2. 12 yea,

yea, & to study a right and sincere way & manner of doing things, resolving not to give over this study of conformity to Gods Will whilest he liveth on earth, but still to bend forward towards ỹ prize of ỹ high calling of God, *Phil.* 3. 13. 14. This is true holinesse, very becoming all those who pretend to be heirs of that holy habitation in the immediat company & fellowship of a holy God, 1 *Joh* 3. 3.

Some may think these things high attainments, and very hard to be won at. I grant it is true. But, First, remember, that there is a very large allowance in the Covenant, promised to His people, which maketh things more easie The Lord hath engaged to take away the stony heart, to give a heart of flesh, a new heart, an heart to fear Him for ever; He hath engaged to put his Law in mens heart, to put His fear in their heart, to make them keep that Law; to put his Spirit in them to cause them keep it. He hath promised to satisfie the Priests with fatnesse that the soul of the people may be satiated with goodnesse: and to keep and water them continually every moment. *Ezek.* 36. 26. *Jer.* 32, 36. 40. *Jer.* 31. 33. *Ezek.* 36. 27. *Jer.* 31. 14. *Jer.* 31. 12. *Isa.* 27. 3. and if He must be enquired to do all these thing unto men, He engageth to pour out the Spirit of Grace and Supplication on them, and so to learn them how to seek those things & how to put him to it, to do all for them, *Zech.* 12. 10. Secondly, for ỹ satisfaction of the weaker, I grant this new creature, as we have circumscribed & enlarged it, will not be found in all the degrees of it, in every gracious person. But it is well,

is well, if (1.) there be a new man, we cannot grant lesse: If any man be in Christ, there must be a new creature, and that is the new man. *Eph.* 5.21. 22, 23, 24. which all must put on who are savingly taught of Christ, there must be some renewing after the Image of God in a mans soul and body; There must be some what of every part of the man pointing towards God, altho I grant every one cannot instruct this to others, neither discern it in himself, because many know not ȳ distinct parts of the soul, nor pieces of reformation competent to every part of ȳ soul & body. Yet it will be found there is some such thing in them, yea, they have of it within them, if you make the thing plain, & clear to them what it is. (2) There must be such a respect unto Gods known cōmands that a man do not allow peaceably any known iniquity to dwell in him: For what concord is between light and darkness, 2 *Cor.* 6. 14, 15. 16. *Ps.* 119. 6. *Ps.* 66. 18. he must not regard iniquity, I grant men may be ignorant of many commands, and many sins, and may imagine in some cases, that some sins are not hatefull unto God. But supposing that they are instructed in these things, there can be no agreement between righteousnesse and unrighteousnesse. (3) Men must point towards all the Law of God, in their honest resolutions; For, this is nothing else, than to give up the heart unto God, to put his Law in it without exception, which is a part of the Covenant we are to make with God, *Heb.* 8. 10. I grant many know not how to point towards Gods Law in all their ways,

but

but if it be made manifeſt unto them how that ſhould be done, they wil point at it. And it is true, they will many times fail of their reſolutions in their practice; yet when they have failed, they can ſay, They did reſolve otherwiſe, and will yet honeſtly and without guile reſolve to do otherways, and it will prove their affliction to have failed of their reſolution, when the Lord diſcovereth it to them, which he will do in due time. (4.) When we are to judge of our ſtate by the new creature, we muſt do it at a convenient time, when we are in good caſe, at leaſt, not when we are in worſt caſe: for the fleſh and Spirit do luſt and fight againſt other, *Gal.* 5. 17. and ſometimes the one, and ſometimes the other doth prevail. Now, I ſay we muſt chooſe a convenient time when the ſpiritual part is not by ſome tentation worſted & overpowered by the fleſh: for in that caſe the new creature is recoyled back in its ſtreams, & much returned to the fountain and the habits, except in ſome ſmall things not eaſily diſcernable, whereby it maketh oppoſition to the fleſh, according to the foreſaid Scripture: for, now it is the time of winter in the ſoul, & we may not expect fruit, yea not leaves, as in ſome other ſeaſon; only here, leſt prophane Atheiſts ſhould make advantage of this, we will ſay, that the ſpirit doth often prevail over the fleſh in a godly man, & the ſcope, aim, tenour and main drift of his way in the Law of the Lord, that is his walk, *Pſ.* 119. 1. whereas the path-way and ordinary courſe of the wicked is ſin, as is often hinted in ſy book of the *Proverbs* of *Solomon*. And if it happen

& a godly man be over-mastered by any transgression, ordinarily it is his sad exercise; & we suppone he keeps it still in dependency before God to have it rectified as *David* speaketh, *Ps.* 56. 13. *Wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling?*

Object *Atheists and hypocrites may have great changes and renovation wrought upon them, and in them and I fear mine be such.*

A. I grant that Atheists and hypocrites have many things in them, which do look like the new creature. First, in this regard of the parts of the man. They may (1.) come to much knowledge, as *Heb.* 6. 4 they are enlightned. (2.) There may be a reel amongst their affections, as they receive the word with joy, *Mat.* 13. 20. (3.) They may reach a great deal of outward reformation in the outward man, both anent freedom from sin and engagement to positive duty, as that pharisee did, *Luk* 18 11. 12. Yea; (4.) in regard of their practical understanding, they may judge some things of God to be excellent. The people said that never man spake as Christ, *Joh* 7. 46. Secondly, hypocrites may have a great deal of profession, 1. They may talk of the Law and Gospel, and of the Covenant, as the wicked do, *Psal.* 50. 16. 2. They may confesse sin openly to their own shame as King *Saul* did, 1 *Sam* 26. 21. 3. They may humble themselves in sackcloth with *Ahab*, 1 *King.* 21. 27 4, They may enquire busily after duty, to come chearfully to receive it, *Isa.* 58. 2. 5. They may joyn with Gods interest in a hard & difficult time, as *Demas* and other hypocrits in the book of the

Acts

Acts of the Apostles, who afterwards fell off. 6. They may give much of their goods to God and ỹ Saints, as *Act.* 5.1,2. if not all their goods, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. Yea, 7. it is not impossible for some such being straitly engaged in their credit, to give their bodies to be burnt, as in the forecited place. Thirdly, Hypocrites may advance far in the common & ordinary steps of a Christian work, such as the elect have when God leads them captive. As, 1. they may be under great convictions of sin, as *Judas* was, *Matth.* 27. 3,4,5. So was King *Saul* often. 2. They may tremble at the Word of God, and be under much terrour, as *Felix* was, *Acts* 24.25. 3. They may rejoyce in receiving of the truth, as *Mat.* 13 20. 4. They may be in some peace and quiet in expectation of salvation by Christ, as the foolish Virgins were, *Matth.* 24 5. All this may be backed & followed with some good measure of Reformation. The unclean spirit may go out of them, *Matth.* 12.43. *Luk.* 18, 11, 12. 6. This work may seem to be confirmed by some special experiences & tastings of the good Word of God, *Heb.* 6.4. Fourthly, Hypocrites may have some things very like the saving graces of the Spirit. As, (1.) They may have a sort of faith with *Simon Magus*, *Acts* 8. 13. (2.) A sort of repentance and walk mournfully, *Mat.* 3. 14. (3.) A great fear of God, such as *Balaam* had, who, for a house full of gold would not go with the messengers of *Balak*, without leave asked of God, and given, *Numb.* 22. 18. (4.) They have a sort of hope, *Job* 13. 13. (5.) They have some love: So had *Herod* to John,

Mark 6.26. I need not insist, it is out of all questi-on: they have fruits of all saving graces. (5.) They have somewhat like the special communications of God and the witnessing of his Spirit, as somewhat like the powers of the world to come powerfully on them, with some flashes of joy arising thence, as *Heb.* 6. 4, 5. Notwithstanding of all which, they are but almost perswaded with *Agrippa* to be Christians, *Acts* 26. 28. It were tedious to speak particularly to each of these things, & to clear it up, that they are all but rotten ware: I shal condescend upon some few things, wherein a truly renewed man, who is in Christ, doth differ from hypocrites and reprobates. (1.) Whatsoever change be in hypocrites, yet their heart is not changed & made new. The new heart is only given to the elect when they are converted & brought under the bond of the Covenant, *Jer.* 32. 39. *Ezek.* 36. 26. Hypocrites did never apprehend Christ as the only satisfying good in all the world, for which & joy they would quit all, for then the Kingdom of God were entered into them, *Mat.* 13.44. The truly renewed man dare and can upon good ground say, he hath a testimony of it from on high, that his heart hath been changed in taking of Christ, and hath been led out after him as the only enriching treasure, in whom to be found, he accounteth all things else losse and dung, *Phil.* 3.8,9. (2.) Whatsoever reformation or profession hypocrites do attain unto, as it cometh not from a new heart, and pure principle of zeal for God, So it is always for some wicked and by-end as to be seen of men

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*Mat.*6.5. or to evite and ſhun ſome outward ſtrait to be free of Gods wrath and the trouble of their own conſcience, *Iſai.* 58. 3. *Mal.* 3. 14. In teſtimony of this, they never have reſpect to all known commands, elſe they ſhould never be aſhamed, *Pſal.* 119.6. nor do they without approven guilt in their own heart, reſolve againſt every known iniquity, elſe they were freed of heart-condemnings, and ſo might juſtly have confidence before God, 1 *Joh.*3.20. If in never ſo mean a caſe, they did from a principle of love unto, & of zeal for Chriſt, and for a right end, confeſſe & profeſſe him, Chriſt were oblidged by his own Word to confeſſe them before his Father, *Mat.* 10.30. (3.) Whatſoever length hypocrites advance in that work, by which people are led in unto Chriſt, yet they never ſeek *firſt* the Kingdom of God and the righteouſneſs thereof, *Mat.* 6. 33. the one thing that is neceſſary, *viz.* Chriſts friendſhip and fellowſhip, is never their *one* thing and heart-ſatisfying choiſe, elſe that better part would never be taken from them, *Luke* 10. 42. (4.) Whatſoever counterfeits of grace are in hypocrites, yet they are all bred there, without any ſaving work of the Spirit of Chriſt, and it is enough to exclude them from the benefit of this mark, that they are never denied to theſe things, nor emptied of them, but ſtill do reſt on them as their ſaviour, ſoy they ſubmit not unto the righteouſneſſe of God, *Rom.* 10 3. & that is enough to keep them at a diſtance from Chriſt, who will never clout that old garment of hypocrites with his fine new linnen, nor put his new wine in theſe

old bottles, *Matth.* 9. 16 17. (5.) We may say, Let hypocrites, reprobates, or atheists have what they can, they want the three great essentials of Religion and true Christianity: First, They are not broken in themselves, and emptied even of their righteousnesse, the length of self loathing, yet lying open for relief. Such lost ones Christ came to seek and save, *Luke* 19. 10. Secondly, They never took up Christ Jesus as the only treasure and Jewel that can only enrich, and should satisfie, and therefore have never cordially agreed unto Gods device in the Covenant, and so are not worthy of him; neither hath the Kingdom of God savingly entered into their heart, *Matth.* 13. 44. Thirdly, They never in earnest do close with Christs whole yoke without exception, judging all his will just and good, holy and spiritual, as *Rom.* 7. 12. and therefore no rest allowed on them by Christ, *Matth.* 11. 29. Therefore whosoever thou art who can lay clear and just claim to these three foresaid things, thou art beyond the reach of all atheists, hypocrites and reprobates in the world, as having answered the great ends and intents of Law and Gospel.

Object. I *am clear sometimes, I think, to lay claim to that mark of the new creature, yet at other times sin doth so prevail over me, that I am made to question all the work within me.*

A. It is much to be lamented, that people professing his Name, should be so suited and enslaved by transgression as many are. Yet in answer to the Objection, if it be seriously Proponed, we say, the Saints

Saints in Scripture, are found in Scripture justly laying claim unto God and his Covenant, when iniquity did prevail over them, as we find; *Ps.* 65. 3. *Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions, thou wilt do them away.* Rom. 7. 25. *Paul* thanks God through Christ, when a Law in his members leads him captive unto sin: But for the better understanding & safe application of such Truths, we must difference between grosse out-breakings and ordinary infirmities or heart-ills, or sins that come unawars upon a man, without forthought or any deliberation. As for the former sort, it is hard for a man, whilest he is under the power of them, to see his gracious change, although it be in him, and very hard to draw any comfort from it, until the man be in some measure recovered, and begin seriously to resent such sins, and to resolve against them. We find *David* calling himself Gods servant, quickly after his numbering of Gods people, but he was then under the serious resentment of his sin. 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. *Jonah* layeth claim to God as his Master under his rebellion, but he is then rueing it, and in a spirit of revenge against himself for his sin, *Jonah* 1. 9, 10, 12. Next, as for these sins of infirmity and dayly incursion and heart-ills, such as those whereof *Paul* doth complain (it is like) there. We shall draw out some things from that seventh chapter to the *Romans*, whereupon *Paul* maintains his interest in Christ, and if you can apply them, it is well (1.) When *Paul* findeth that he doth much fail, & cannot reach conformity to Gods Law, as being too strict, so as men cannot keep it,

as hypocrites use to speak; but he doth blame him self as being carnal; and he saith of the Law, that it is good, and holy, and spiritual, *Rom.* 7.12,14. (2.) He can say, he failed of a good which he intended, and did outshoot himself, and he had often honestly resolved against the evil which he fell into, *Rom* 7 15 18,19. (3.) He saith, that the prevailing of sin over him is his exercise, so as he judgeth himself wretched because of such a body of death, frō which he longeth to be delivered, *Rom.* 7.24. (4.) He saith, that whilst he is under the power and law of sin, there is somewhat in the bottom of his heart opposing it although overmastered by it, which would be another way, and when that gets the upper hand, it is a delightsome thing, *Rom* 7.22.25. upon these things he thanks God in Christ that there is no condemnation, *Rom.* 7.25. *Rom.* 8. 1. Now, then look if ye can lay claim to these things. (1.) If you do blame your self, and approve the law, whilst you fail. (2.) If you can say that you do often resolve against sin honestly, and without known guilt; and do so resolve the contrary good before the evill break in upon you. (3.) If you can say, that you are so far exercised with your failings, as to judg your self wretched because of such things, & a body of death which is the root and fountain of such things. (4.) If you can say, that there is a party within you opposing these evils, which would be at the right way, and as it were, is in its element, when it is in Gods way, it is well; only be advised not to take rest until, in some good measure, you be rid of the ground of this

this objection, or at least, untill you can very clearly say, you are waging war with these things: Now a good help against the prevailing power of sin, is to cleave close to Christ Jesus by faith, which as it is a desirable part of Sanctification, and a notable piece of conformity to Gods will, and most subservient unto his designe in the Gospel, *Gal.* 2. 20. 21. and so should be much endeavoured by people as a work pleasing unto God, *Joh.* 6. 29. so it is ȳ ready way to draw life & sap from Christ ȳ blessed root for fruitfulnesse in all cases, as *Joh.* 15. 4, 5.

Object. I *do not partake of these special communications of God, mentioned in the Scripture, and actings and outgoings of His spirit, whereof gracious people often are speaking, and whereunto they attain; the want of these things maketh me much suspect my state.*

A I shal shortly hint some of these excellent cōmunications, and I hope upon a right discovery of them, there will be but smal ground found for the jealous complaints of many gracious people.

First, (beside these convictions of the spirit of God, which use to usher Christs way to the souls of men, and these also which afterwards do ordinarily attend them) there is a seal of the spirit of God spoken of in Scripture, the principal thing whereof is, the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, imprinting the draughts and lineaments of Gods Image and revealed will upon a man, as a seal or signet doth leave an impression and stamp of its likeness upon the thing sealed, so it is, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. *The foundation of God---having this seal, The Lord knoweth them who are His. And let every*

one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniqui
ty; and thus I conceive the seal to be called a wit-
nesse, 1 *Joh.* 5 10. *He that believeth hath the witnesse*
in himself, that is, the grounds upon which an inter-
est in Christ is to be made out and proved, are in
every Believer; for he hath somewhat of the san-
ctifying work of Gods spirit in him, which is a sure
(although not alwayes a clear and manifest) wit-
nesse.

Secondly, There is communion with God much
talked of among Christians, whereby they under-
stand the sensible presence of God refreshing the
soul exceedingly; But if we speak properly, com-
munion with God is a mutual interest between God
and a man, who hath closed with him in Christ. It
is a commonnesse or a common interest between
God and a man; not only is a man interested in
God Himself, but in all that is the Lords, so the
Lord hath a special interest in the man, and also all
that belongs unto him. There is a communion be-
tween husband & wife, whereby they have a speci-
all interest in other persons, goods, gear, and con-
cernments so it is here: there is such a communi-
on with God, He is our God, and all things are ours,
because he is ours: This communion with God all
true Believers have at all times, as we shall shew
afterwards: I grant there is an actuall improvement
of that cōmunion, whereby men do boldly medle
with any thing that belongs unto God, & do medle
himself as their own, with much homlinesse and
familiarity, especially in worship, when the soul
doth converse with a living God, partaking of the
Divine

Divine nature, growing like unto him, and ſweetly travelling through His attributes, with ſome confidence of intereſt, viewing theſe things as the mans own goods and gear: this we call communion with God in Ordinances. This indeed is not ſo ordinarily nor frequently made out to men, and all his people do not equally partake of it; and it is true that what is in God, goeth not out for the behove of the man to his apprehenſion equally at all times, yet certainly cōmunion with God, properly ſo called, *viz.* that commonneſſe of intereſt between God & a man who is ſavingly in Covenant with Him, doth alwayes ſtand firm and ſure; & ſo much of communion with God in Ordinances have all Believers, as that their heart converſeth with a living God there now and then, & is in ſome meaſure changed into that ſame image, and there needeth be no doubt about any further in it.

Thirdly, There is a thing which is called fellowſhip with God, often miſtaken alſo amongſt Believers If by fellowſhip be meant the walking in our duty as in the ſight of a living God, who ſeeth and heareth us, and is witneſſe to all our carriage, It is a thing common unto all gracious men, they all have it habitually, and in deſign, *Pſal.* 16.8. *I have ſet the Lord alwayes before me*, yea and often they have it actually in exerciſe, when their Spirit is in any good frame; they walk as if they ſaw God ſtanding by them, and have ſome thoughts of his favour through Chriſt, *Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son.* Joh. 1. 3. If we by *fellowſhip* do mean a ſweet refreſhing familiar

sensible conversing with God, which doth delight and refresh the soul, (beside what the conscience of duty doth) It is then a walking in the light of His countenance, and a good part of sensible presence, and although it seemeth *Enoch* had much of it, whilest it is said he walked with God, *Gen.* 5. 24. yet it is not so ordinary as the former, nor so common to all Christians; for here the soul is filled as w marrow and fatnesse, following hard after its good and singularly upheld by his right hand, *Psal.* 63. 5. 8.

Fourthly, there is a thing which is called accesse unto God, and this I take to be the removing of the obstructions out of the way between a man & God, so as the man is admitted to come near. We are said to have accesse to a great person, when doors are cast open, guards removed from about him, and we admitted to come close at him, so it is here. Now this accesse in *Scripture*, is sometimes taken for Christs preparing of the way, the removing of enmity between God and sinners, so as men now have a patent way to come unto God through Christ, *Eph* 2. 18. Sometimes it is taken for the actual improvement of that accesse purchased by Christ, when a man finds all obstructions and differences which do ordinarily fall in between him, and God, removed; God is not uncouth to him, nor as a stranger keeping up himself from him, or frowning on him, but y man is admitted to come even unto his seat, as *Job.* 23. 3. of the want of this doth *Job* complain, *Job.* 23. 8 9. whilst he saith, I go forward, backward, to the right and left hand,

and

and I find him not. The firſt ſort of acceſſe is common to all Believers, they are brought near by the bloud of the Covenant, and are no more far off, as the deadly enmity between God and them is removed. But acceſſe in the other ſenſe is diſpenſed more, according to the Lords abſolute ſoveraignity and pleaſure, and it is left in the power of believers to obſtruct it unto themſelves until it pleaſe the Lord mercifully and freely to grant it unto them again, ſo it is up and down, and there needs be no queſtion, (as to a mans ſtate) about it

Fifthly, There is a thing called liberty before God, and this properly is freedom, or free ſpeaking unto God: many do much queſtion their ſtate becauſe of the want of this now and then, ſince ſy Scripture hath ſaid, *Where the Spirit is, there is liberty*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17. but they do injuſtly confine that liberty, ſpoken of there, unto this free ſpeaking before God. I grant where the ſpirit of the Lord doth ſavingly diſcover Gods will in the Scriptures to a man, There is liberty from any obligation to the ceremonial Law, & from the condemning power of the moral Law, and from much of that groſſe darkneſſe and ignorance which is on natural hearts as a vail hiding Chriſt in the Goſpel from them. *I* grant alſo, that ſometimes, even this liberty which is a free communing with God, and ordering of our cauſe before him, and filling of our mouth with arguments, *Job* 23. 4. is granted to the Godly, but not as liberty taken in the former ſenſes. Although the Lord hath obliged Himſelf to pour out the Spirit of prayer upon

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all the house of *David* in some measure, Zech 12. 10 yet this communication of the Spirit which we call liberty or free speaking unto God dependeth much on the Lords absolute pleasure when, and in what measure to allow it. This liberty which we call freedom, or free speaking with God in prayer, is sometimes much abstracted from any great confidence in the time of prayer, (at least till it draw towards the close of it) it standeth much in a vivacity of the understanding to take up the case which a man is to speak before God, so as he can order his cause; & next there be words, or verbal expressions elegant, suitable, and very emphatical, or powerful & pithy, there is also joyned a ferveney of spirit in prayer, whereof the Scripture speaketh; the soul is hot and bended, and very intent: There is also ordinarily in this liberty a special melting of the heart (often joyned with a great measure of the Spirit of Grace and supplication, *Zech.* 11. 10.) so the soul is powred out before God as for a first-born: Such is the liberty which many Saints get before God, whilst in much brokennesse of heart & fervency of spirit they are admitted to speak their mind fully to God, as a living God, noticing (at least) their prayer. Sometimes this liberty is joyned w confidence, & then it is not only a free, but also a bold speaking before God, it is boldness w confidence, *Eph.* 3. 12. this is more rarely imparted unto men than former, yet it is ordinary: It hath in it, beside what we spake before, some influence of ye Spirit upon faith, making it put out some vigorous acting in prayer; there is a sweet

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mournful frame of ſpirit, by which a man poureth out his heart in Gods boſom, and with ſome confidence of his favour and good will, pleadeth his cauſe before him, as a living God, and this is all the ſenſible preſence ỹ many Saints do attain unto; There is no ground of doubt anent a mans ſtate in the point of liberty before God in this laſt ſenſe becauſe there is nothing eſſentiall to ỹ making up of a gracious ſtate here: ſome have it, ſome want it, ſome have it at ſometimes, &not at other times, ſo that it is much up&down; yet I may ſay, gracious men may do much (by a very ordinary influence) contributing towards the attaining and retaining, or keeping ſuch a frame of Spirit.

Sixthly, There is a thing, called influence, or breathing of the *Spirit*, This gracious influence (for of ſuch only do I now ſpeake) is either ordinary, and this is the operations of ỹ holy Spirit on the ſoul & the habits of grace there, whereby they are ſtill kept alive & in ſome exerciſe and actings although not very diſcernable. This influence (I conceive) doth alwayes attend believers, and is that *keeping* and *watering* night and day and every moment promiſed, *Iſa.* 27. 3 Or, this influence is more ſingular and ſpecial, and is that ſame to a gracious (although a withered) ſoul, as the wind and breath to the dry bones, putting them in good caſe, *Ezek.* 37. 9. 10. and as the dew or rain to the graſſe, or newly mowen field and parched ground, *Pſal.* 72. 6. Such influence is meant, *Cant.* 4. 16. by the blowing of the South wind, making the ſpices to flow out. When the ſpirit moveth

moveth thus, there is an edge put upon the graces of God in the soul, and they are made to act more vigorously. This is the enlarging of the heart, by which a man doth run in the wayes of God, *Ps.* 119.32. This influence is more discernable than the former, and not so ordinarily communicated. Also here, sometimes the wind bloweth more upon one grace, and sometimes more discernably upon another, and often upon many of the graces together, and according to the lesser or greater measure of this influence, the soul acteth more or lesse vigorously towards God: & since faith is a created grace in the soul, this influence of the Spirit is upon it, sometimes lesse, sometimes more, & accordingly is the assurance of faith small or great.

Seventhly, There is the hearing of prayer, often spoken of in Scripture; and many vex themselves about it, alledging that they know nothing of it experimentally I grant there is a favorable hearing of prayer; But we must remember it is twofold. Either, (1.) it is such as man is simply to believe by way of argument on scriptural grounds. As if I be fled unto Christ, and do approach unto God in him, pray according to his will, not regarding iniquity in my heart, exercising faith about ỹ thing I pray for, absolutely or conditionally, according to the nature of the thing, and promises aneut it, I am obliged to believe ỹ God heareth my prayer and will give what is good, according to these Scriptures, *Joh.* 14. 13. 14. *Whatsoever you ask in my Name, I will do it.* 1 *Joh.* 5. 14. *This is our*

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confidence that whatsoever we ask according to his will, he heareth us. Mark 11. 24. *Believe that you receive, and you shal have what you desire. Psal.* 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity, he will not hear.* Then if I regard not iniquity, I may believe that he doth hear me. Or, secondly, A man doth sensibly perceive that God heareth his prayer. It is made out to his heart, without any sylogistical deduction. Such a hearing of prayer got *Hanna*, *1 Sam*, 1.8. her countenance was no more sad. Surely the Lord did breath upon her faith, and made her believe that she was heard, and she could not make it out by any argument; for, she had not grounds whereupon to build the premisses of the argument according to Scripture in that particular. God did stamp it some way upon her heart sensibly, and so made her believe it. This is but rarely granted, especially in cases clearly deducible in Scripture. And therefore people are much to be satisfied in exercising their faith about the other, and let God give of this latter what he pleaseth. A man gracious state should not be brought upon debate, upon the account of such hearing of prayer.

Eightly, There is assurance of Gods favour by the witnessing of our own spirits; which assurance is deduced by way of argument syllogistically; thus; whosoever believeth on Christ, shal never perish; But I do believe on Christ: therefore I shal never perish. Who so hath respect unto all Gods Commandements shal never be ashamed; But *I* have respect unto all his Commands; Therefore I shall never be ashamed. I say, by reasoning thus,

and

and comparing spiritual things w spiritual thin iv
a man may attain unto a good certainty of his g pi
cious state. It is supponed, 1 *Joh* 3.18. 19. t ne
by loving the brethren in deed & truth, we m o
assure our hearts before God, and that a man m
rejoyce upon the testimony of a good conscien f
2 *Cor*. 1. 12. A man may have confidence if r
heart do not condemn him, 1 *Joh*. 3 21. We m
then attain unto some assurance (although not f
assurance) by the witnesse of our own spirits. I d
not deny, yin this witnessing of our spirits toward
assurance. there is some concurrence of the Spir
of God. But, I conceive, there needeth but a ve
ry ordinary influence without whichwe can do no
thing. Now, this assurance, such as it is, may be
reached by intelligent believers, who keep a good
conscience in their walk. So I hope, there need
be no debate about it as to a mans gracious state;
for, if a man will clear himself of heart-condem
nings, he will speedily reach this assurance.

Ninthly, There is a witnessing of Gods Spirit,
mentioned, *Rom*. 8. 16. *A bearing witnesse with our
spirits, that we are the children of God.* This ope-
ration of the Spirit is best understood, if we pro-
duce any syllogism by which our spirits doth wit-
nesse our sonship; as for example, Whosoever lov-
eth y brethren, is past from death to life, & conse-
quently is in Christ, But I love y Brethren; There-
fore I am past from death to life. Here there is a
threefold operation of the Spirit, or three ope-
rations rather. The first is a beam of divine
light upon the first proposition, perswading the
divine

ivine authority of it, as the Word of God. The pirit of the Lord must witnesse the Divinity of he Scripture, and that it is the infallible Word of od, far beyond all other arguments can be used or it The second operation, is, a glorious beam f light from the Spirit, shining upon the second roposition, and so upon his own graces in the oul, discovering them to be true graces, and such y Scripture calleth so Thus we are said to know y his Spirit the things freely given unto us of God *Cor.* 2. 13. The third operation is in order to the hird proposition of the argument, or the conclu-ion: and this I conceive to be nothing else but an nfluence upon faith, strengthning it to draw a con-clusion of ful assurance upon the forsaid premisses Now, (with submission unto others, who have reater light in the Scripture, & more experience of these precious cōmunications) I do conceive he witnesse of the Spirit, or witnessing of it, which s mentioned, *Rom.* 8. 16. is not y first operation up-on y first proposition; for, y operation is y testimony of the Spirit, by which he beareth witnesse to the Divinity of the whole Scripture, and asserteth the divine authority of it unto the souls of gra-cious men, and such an operation may be upon a truth of Scripture, which doth not relate to a mans sonship or interest in Christ at all. The Spirit may so shine upon any truth relating to duty, or any other fundamental truth perswading the Divinity of it, upon and unto the soul, and speak nothing relating to a mans interest in Christ. Neither is the third operation of the Spirit,

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by which he makes faith boldly draw the conclu-sion. This witnessing of the *Spirit* for that operati-on, is nothing else but influence upon faith bring-ing it out to full assurance; but that whereupon this full assurance is drawn or put out, is somewha deponed and witnessed already. Therefore I con-ceive the second operation of the Spirit upon the second proposition, and so upon the graces in the man, is that witnesse of Gods Spirit, that beam of divine light, shining upon these graces, where-by they are made very conspicuous to the under-standing; That is the witnesse; the shining so on them is his witnessing: for, only here in this proposition and in this operation, doth the Spi-rit of God prove a co-witnesse with our spirit: For, the main thing wherein the witnesse of our spirit lieth, is in the second proposition, and so the Spirit of God, witnessing with our spirits, is also in that same proposition. So these two witnesses, having deponed and witnessed one and the same thing, *viz* the truth and reality of such and such graces in the man, which our own spirit or consci-ence doth depone, according to its knowledg, and the *Spirit* of the Lord doth certainly affirm & wit-nesse to be so. There is a sentence drawn forth and a conclusion of ȳ mans sonship by the mans faith breathed upon by ȳ Spirit for ȳ effect and this con-clusion beareth the full assurance of a mans sonshi It may be presumed, that some true *Saints* do no partake of this all their dayes, as *Heb.* 2. 15.

Tenthly, I speak with the experience of man *Saints*, and, I hope, according to Scripture. If

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say, there is a communication of the Spirit of God which is let out to some of his people sometimes, It is some what beside, if not beyond, that witnessing of a sonship spoken of before. It is a glorious divine manifestation of God unto the soul, shedding abroad Gods love in the heart; It is a thing better felt than spoken of; It is no audible voice, but it is a wasse of glory filling the soul with God, as he is life, light, love and liberty countervailing that audible voice, *O man, greatly beloved*, Dan 9. 22. 23. putting a man in a transport with this on his heart, *It is good to be here*, as *Mat.* 17. 4. It is that which went out from Christ to *Mary*, when he but mentioned her name. *Joh.* 20. 16. He had spoken some words to her before, and she understood not that it was he: But when he uttereth this one word, *MARY*, there was some admirable divine conveyance and manifestation made out unto her heart, by which she was so satisfyingly filled, that there was no place for arguing and disputing, whether or not that was Christ, and if she had any interest in him. That manifestation made faith to it self, and did purchase credit and trust to it self, and was equivalent with, *Thus saith the Lord.* This is such a glance of glory,, that it may in the highest sense be called ȳ earnest or first fruits of the inheritance; for it is a felt armfull of ȳ holy God, almost wholly conforming the man unto his likness, so swallowing him up that he forgetteth all things except the present manifestation: O how glorious is this manifestation of the Spirit! Faith here riseth to so full an assurance,

assurance, that it resolveth wholly into sensible imbracements of God. This is the thing which doth best deserve the title of sensible presence. And, it is like, is not given unto all believers, some whereof, are all their dayes under bondage, and in fear, *Heb* 2. 15. But here love, almost perfect, casteth out fear. This is so absolutely let out upon the Masters pleasure, and so transient and passing or quickly gone when it is, that no man may bring his gracious state upon debate for want of it.

Eleventhly, There is a thing we call peace, about which many do vex themselves. This peace is either anent a mans state, that he is reconciled unto God by Jesus Christ, or it is anent his present case and condition, that he is walking so, as approven of God at least, so far, as there is no quarrell or controversie between God & him threatning a stroak: both of these are either such in the court of Scripture, and consequently in Gods account, or in the court of a mans own conscience. Peace, anent a mans state, as being in Christ, is sure in the court of Scripture & of heaven, when a man doth by faith close with Christ and new Covenant, *Rom.* 5. 1. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God*, it being sure and solid in the court of Scripture, it should hold sure in the court of a mans conscience, it being rightly informed; for in that case, it still speaks according to Scripture; but because often the conscience is misinformed and in the dark, therefore there is often peace anent a mans state according to Scripture whilst his conscience doth threaten the contrary, and doth still condemn,

condemn, and refuſeth to abſoil the man as being reconciled unto God through Chriſt. In this caſe, the conſcience muſt be informed, and the mans gracious ſtate made out by the marks of grace, as we ſhew before; and here the witneſſe of my own ſpirit, will do much to allay the cry of the conſcience, and if the Spirit of the Lord joyn his witneſſe and teſtimony, the conſcience is perfectly ſatisfied, and proclaimeth peace to the man. The other peace, anent a mans preſent caſe or condition, *viz.* that it is approven of God in a Goſpel ſenſe, it may be wanting, and juſtly wanting, although the other peace anent a mans ſtate be ſure. This peace anent a mans caſe and condition, it is either ſuch in the court of Scripture, and this is when a man is not regarding iniquity, and reſpecting the commands of God without exception; then the Scripture ſaith, he ſtands in an even place, and he needeth fear no ſtated quarrell between God and him, in order to a temporary ſtroak: and when it is thus, his conſcience ſhould alſo abſoil him that ſame way; and would do ſo, if it were rightly informed; but becauſe the conſcience is often in the dark, therefore a man may be alarm'd with evil in the court of conſcience, as if he were juſtly to expect a ſtroak from God becauſe of his ſin, and ſome quarrel God hath at him, although he intend ſalvation for him; this is enough to keep a man in diſquiet, & to inhibit him rejoycing allowed upon him whilſt he is walking in his integrity: therfore a man muſt here alſo inform his conſcience, and receive no accuſations

accuſations nor condemnings from it, unleſſe i make them clear by Scripture: at that bar, let e very man ſtand, both anent his ſtate and conditio or caſe; and let him appeal from all other court to that, and not receive any indictment but co form to the truth of God, by which the conſcienc is to proceed in all things; and if this were we lookt unto, there would not be ſo many ground leſs ſuſpicions amongſt the Lords people, eithe anent their ſtate or their condition upon ever thought which entereth their mind.

Twelfthly, There is the joy of the holy Ghoſ and this is when the Spirit doth breath upon ou rejoycing in God (which is a grace very little i exerciſe with many) & maketh it ſet out ſenſibl and vigorouſly; and he exciteth and ſtirreth up th paſſion of joy and of delight in the ſoul, ſo as there is an unſpeakable and glorious joy in the ſoul, i the apprehenſion of Gods friendſhip & nearneſſ unto him. 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. This joy followeth upon peace and peace followeth righteouſneſſe, *Rom.* 14. 17. This joy readily will not fail to be according to the meaſure of the aſſurance of faith, as 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *In whom believing, ye rejoice, &c.* ſo that the removal of miſtakes about other things, will alla doubts anent this.

Now, becauſe ſome of theſe excellent cōmuni-cations of ȳ Spirit, after they are gone, are brought in queſtion as deluſions of Satan for vindication of them we ſay, that the ſpecial operations of Gods Spirit in any high degree, uſually are com-municated to the people after ſuch brokenneſſe of

Spirit

Spirit, *Pſal.*51 8. after ſo ſingular pains in Religious duty, *Dan.* 9.3.21. or in time of ſuch ſuffering for righteouſneſſe, 1 *Pet.* 4.14. or if they break in as the rain that waiteth not for man, then they do ſo humble and abaſe the perſon, *Iſa.* 6. 5. and there are found ſo many evidences of grace in the man, *Rom.* 8.16. or theſe things do ſo provoke unto holineſſe, and to have every thing anſwerable and conform unto theſe manifeſtations of God, 2 *Tim.* 2 19. the perſon under them doth ſo loath all things beſide Gods friendſhip and fellowſhip, *Matth.* 17. 4. and theſe things do carry on them and with them ſo much authority & divine ſuperſcription, whilſt they are in the ſoul ; that afterwards they may appear ſufficiently to be ſpeciaH communications of God, and ſingular gracious operations of His Spirit, and no deluſions of Satan transforming himſelf into an angel of light, 2 *Cor.* 11. 14. nor ſuch common flaſhes of the ſpirit as may admit afterwards irrecoverable apoſtacy from God. *Heb.* 6. 4. 5. 6. Now then to conclude this part of the work that relateth unto triall; I ſay to all theſe who complain of the want of the precious out-lettings of the Spirit. (1.)Bleſs God if ye want nothing eſſential for making out of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, God hath given unto you Chriſt Jeſus the greateſt giſt. He had and ſince your heart is ſhapen out for Him,He wil with him,give you all things that are good for you in their ſeaſon.(2.)I do believe,upon a right ſearch& trial,after you have underſtood the communications of the ſpirit, you are not ſo great a

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stranger to many things, as you did suspect your-
self to be. But, (3.) Remember the promises of life,
and of peace with God, are no where in Scripture
made unto these speciall things whereof you al-
ledge the want: The promises are made unto faith,
followed with Holinesse: and it may be presumed,
that many heirs of Glory do not in this life par-
take of some of these things, but are in bondage
all their dayes through fear of death, *Heb.* 2. 1
so that there should be no mistake about the
things; we may seek after them, but God is fre
to give or withhold them. (4.) Many do seek af-
ter such manifestations before they give credit
by faith unto Gods Word; He hath born record
that there is life enough for men in Christ Jesus
and if men would by believing set to their seal
that God is true, they should partake of more of
these excellent things. (5.) I may say, many have
not honourable apprehensions and thoughts of the
Spirit of God, whose proper work it is to put on
the foresaid noble operations; They do not ad-
dore him as God, but vex, grieve, quench and re-
sist Him, and many people complaining of the
want of these things, are not at the pains to seek
the Spirit in his out-goings, and few do set them-
selves apart for such precious receits; There-
fore be at more pains in Religion, give more credit
to His Word, and esteem more highly of the Spirit
of God, and so you may find more of these excel-
lent things.

How

How to attain unto *a saving interest* in *CHRIST.*

HAving, in the former part of this Treatise put every mans state to tryal. It now remains, that in this following part, we give advice to those who neither can nor dare lay claim to the marks formerly mentioned.

Q. *What shal they do who want the marks of a true and saving interest in Christ, already spoken of, and neither can nor dare pretend unto them?*

A. If men miss in themselves ȳ marks of a saving interest in Christ, spoken of before; Thē it is their duty, and of all that here this Gospel, *personally, and heartily to close with Gods device of saving sinners by Christ Jesus*, and this shal secure their state.

For ȳ better understanding of this, we shal premise somethings for information of these who are more ignorant, & then speak more directly to the thing. As for the things to be premised.

1. The Lord did at the beginning, out of his bounty, make a Covenant with man in *Adam Gen.* 2.17. and did enable man to abide in that Covenant *Eccl.*7.29. But man by eating that forbidden fruit, *Gen.* 3 did break that Covenant, *Hos.* 6. 7. and made it void for ever, *Rom.* 3. 20. and involved himself into all misery thereby. *Rom.* 5 12. (2.) The Lord did most freely, from everlasting purpose and intend to save men another way, *viz* by Christ Jesus & the Covenant of grace, in which he

intended reconcilement with the Elect, through Christ Jesus (God and Man born of a woman in due time to make this agrement effectual) And this device of satisfying His own justice, and saving the Elect by Christ, He did at first intimate to our Parents in paradise, *Gen.*3.15 where he saith, that the seed of the Woman shal bruise the serpents head, and the Lord hath in all generations made this known to his Church. (3.) The Lord hath in all ages covenanted to be the reconciled God of all these, who by their subjection to His Ordinances did professe their satisfaction with this device, and oblige themselves to acquiesce in the same and to seek salvation by Christ Jesus, as God doth offer him in the Gospel: so all the people of Israel, are called the Lords people, and are said to avouch Him to be their God, and He doth avouch them to be His people, *Exod.* 19.5.8. *Deut.*26. 17.18. yea the Lord doth also engage himself, to be the God of the seed and children of these who do so subject to His Ordinances. The Covenant is said to be made between God and all the people young and old, present and not present that day, *Deut.* 29.10. 11,---15. & all are appointed to come under some seal of that Covenant, as was enjoyned to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 10. not only was it so in the Old Testament, but it is so in the New Testament also. The Lord makes offer of himself to be our God in Christ Jesus, and the people professing their satisfaction in that offer, and in testimony thereof, subjecting themselves unto the ordinances, They are reckoned a covenanted people, and are joyned

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unto his Church in thousands receiving a seal of the Covenant with any further particular and previous trial, *Act.* 2. 38. 41. (4) Many do deal treacherously with God in this Covenant, *Psal* 78. 36. 37. and although they professe their estimation of Christ the Saviour, and their heart-satisfaction with that device of saving sinners by him, and having the Image of God restored by him, in them; yet their heart is not right with God, and they do content themselves with an empty title, of being in a sealed Covenant with God, *Joh.* 8. 39. *Abraham* is our father (say they) For although the Lord obligeth every man, who professeth his satisfaction with Christ Jesus the devised ransome, to be cordial and sincere herein and only to these who are so, doth he make out the spirituall promises of the Covenant, (they only being priviledged to be the sons of God, who do really receive Christ) *Joh.* 1. 12. yet the Lord doth permit many to professe their closing with him in Christ, both in the Old and new Testament, whilst their heart is not engaged, & he doth admit them to be members of his Church, granting unto them the use of Ordinances, and many other external mercies and priviledges denyed unto the heathen, who are not in Covenant with him. (5.) Although the great part of people do foolishly fancy, that they have closed with God in Christ Jesus sincerely and heartily, or at least, they do without any ground or warrand, promise a new heart to themselves before they depart this life, yet there be but very few who do really and cordially

close with God in Christ Jesus, as he is offered i
the Gospel: and so there be but very few save
as is clear, *Mat.* 7. 14. *Strait is the gate and narr*
is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there
who find it. Mat. 20. 16. *Many are called, but few*
chosen. If people would believe this, it might he
to alarm them. (6.) Although none at all do cordi
ly close with God in Christ Jesus, and acquiesce
that ransome found out by God, except o
ly such as are elected *Rom.* 11. 7 and whose hea
the Lord doth soveraignly determine to & bles
choise, *Joh.* 6. 44. yet the Lord hath left it a
duty upon people who hear this Gospel, to cl
with his offer of salvation through Christ Jesus,
if it were in their power to do it. And the Lo
through these commands and exhortatio
(wherein he obligeth men to the thing) d
convey life and strength to the elect, & doth the
in convey the new heart unto them, which poi
eth kindly towards this new device of saving
ners, and towards Christ in his Covena
relations; or, it is the Lords mind in these co
mands and invitations, to put people to so
duty w which he useth to concurr for accompli
ing that businesse between him and them; so th
it is a coming on our part, and yet a drawing
His part, *Joh.* 6. 44. it is a drawing on His part,
a running on our part, *Cant.* 1. 4. it is an approa
ing on our part, and yet a choosing and cau
to approach on His part, *Psal.* 65. 4. it is a
lieving or receiving on our part, *Joh.* 1. 12.
yet it is given us to believe, *Phil.* 1. 29.

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Having premiſed theſe things, I ſay, if men miſſe in themſelves the marks of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, ſpoken of in the former part of the treatiſe: Then for ſecuring their ſtate, they are obliged with all diligence perſonally and heartily to accept of, and cloſe with Gods device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus, held out in the Goſpel. In handling of this, we ſhal (1) Shew what it is to accept of and cloſe with that noble invention. (2.) We ſhal ſhew, that it is the neceſſary duty of thoſe who would be in favour with God & ſecure their ſouls. (3.) What is previouſly, required of thoſe who perform this duty. (4.) What are the qualifications and properties of this duty, if rightly managed. (5.) What be the native conſequents of it, if it be performed aright?

As for the *Firſt*, whas it is to cloſe with Gods device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus, held out in the Goſpel? Here we muſt remember (as we ſhew before) that at firſt God willed man to abide in his favour, by holding faſt his firſt integrity in which he was created; but man by his tranſgreſſion loſt Gods favour, made void that Covenant of works, and put himſelf in an utter incapacity to regain the Lords friendſhip which he had loſt by his ſin, and to reſcue himſelf from the curſe and wrath now due to him for the ſame or any way to procure his own ſalvation; But the Lord freely hath manifeſted another way of repairing mans loſt eſtate, *viz.* By ſending his Son Chriſt Jeſus in the fleſh to ſatisfie His juſtice for the ſins of the Elect, and to

reſtore in thē His Image now defaced, & to bri
them unto glory, and He hath made open pr
clamation in the Church, that whoſoever w
lay aſide all thoughts of ſaving themſelves by t
Covenant of Works, or inherent righteouſnes
and will agree heartily to be ſaved by Chriſt J
ſus. They ſhall be reſtored to a better conditio
than formerly man was into, and ſhall be ſave
So then, to cloſe with Gods device of ſaving ſi
ners by Chriſt Jeſus, is, to quite and forgo a
thoughts of help or ſalvation by our own righte
ouſneſſe, and to agree unto this way which Go
hath found out. It is to value and highly eſteen
of Chriſt Jeſus as the treaſure ſufficient to en
rich poor man, and with the heart to believ
this record, that there is life enough in Him fo
men. It is to pleaſe this invention and to ac
quieſce in it, as the only way to true happineſſe
It is to poine towards the Mediator, as Go
holdeth him out in the Goſpel, with deſire to
lay the ſtreſſe of our whole ſtate on Him. Thi
is that which is called faith or believing, the re
ceiving of Chriſt, or believing on his Name, *Joh.*
1. 12. This is that believing on the Name of
the Lord Jeſus, commanded unto the Jaylor for
his ſafety, *Act.* 16. 31. This agreeth to all the
deſcriptions of juſtifying faith in the Scripture.
This doth anſwer the type of looking to the bra
ſen Serpent lifted up in the wilderneſſe, *Joh.* 3. 14.
15. and this is ſupponed in all theſe ordinary
actings of Faith, to which, promiſes are annex
ed in the Scripture; and will be found in all
who

who have got the new heart from God, and it will be found in none elſe.

As to the *ſecond* thing, *viz.* That this is the neceſſary duty of all ſuch who would be in favour with God and ſecure their ſouls, It appeareth thus, 1. This cloſing with Gods device, or believing in Chriſt, is commanded every where in Scripture by the Lord, as the condition of the new Covenant, giving title and right unto all the ſpirituall bleſſings of the ſame, for, it is, upon the matter, the receiving of Chriſt; This is commanded, whilſt God bids men come and buy, that is, impropriat all by cloſing with that device, *Iſa* 55. 1 the weary are commanded to come unto him thus, for their reſt, *Mat.* 11. 28. *This is his Commandement, that we believe on the Name of his Son,* 1 Joh. 3. 23. this is enough to prove it a duty incumbent. But further it is ſuch a duty, as only giveth title and right to a Sonſhip; for, only they who receive Him, are priviledged to be Sons, *Joh.* 1. 12. *To as many as received him, to them he gave power to be the Sons of God, even to ſuch as believed on his Name.* 2. It appeareth to be the neceſſary duty of all, thus, No leſſe than this doth give a meeting unto God, offering Himſelf to be our God in Chriſt; and no leſſe than this doth anſwer our profeſſion, as we are in Covenant with Him, as members of His viſible Church. The Lord offereth to be our God in Chriſt; if we do not cloſe with the offer, laying aſide all thoughts of other wayes, by which we may attain to happineſſe,

we give no meeting to him; He saith, *This is* [illegible] *Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him*, *Mat.* 17. 5. If we close not with the offer, we give no answer unto God. Morover, we are all baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, *Acts* 2. 38. Now unless we close with Christ, as said is, we falsifie that profession. Therefore, since this is the thing which doth answer Gods offer in the Gospel, and make good our profession, as members of His Church, it is a necessary duty lying upon us.

3. Whatsoever a man hath else, If he do not thus close with Gods device anent Christ Jesus, and do not receive him, it doth not avail, either as to the accepting of his person, or of his performances, or as to the saving of his soul. Men are accepted only in Christ the beloved, *Eph.* 1. 6. *Abel* and his offering are accepted by faith, *Heb.* 11. 4. *Without faith, it is impossible to please God*, Heb 11. 6. and he that believeth not, is condemned already, and shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him, *Joh.* 3. 18. 36. for want of this, no external title doth availl; The children of the kingdom are cast out, if this be wanting, *Mat.* 8. 10, 11, 12. The people of *Israel* are like other heathens, in regard of a graceless state, lying open to the wrath of God, *Jer.* 9. 25, 26. If men do not believe that he who was slain at *Jerusalem*, who was called Christ Jesus, and witnessed unto by the Prophets and declared to be the Son of God by many mighty works; I say, if men do not believe that he is the way, and close

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not with him as the only way, they shall die in their sins, *John* 8. 24.

We say then, it is a most necessary duty thus to close with Christ Jesus as the blessed relief appointed for sinners; every one who is come to years of understanding, and heareth this Gospel, is obliged to take to heart his own lost condition, and Gods gracious offer of peace and salvation through Christ Jesus and speedily to flee from the wrath to come, by accepting and closing with this offer, heartily acquiescing therein as a satisfying way for saving of poor sinners; and, that all may be the more encouraged to set about this duty, when they hear him praying them to be reconciled unto him, Let them remember that peace and salvation is offered to the people in universal terms; to all without exception: if any man will, he shall be welcome, *Rev.* 22. 17. if any thirst, (although after that which will never profit,) yet they shall be welcome here, on the condition foresaid, *Isa.* 55. 2, 3. all are commanded to believe, 1 *Joh* 3 23. The promises are to all who are externally called by the Gospel; God excludes none, if they do not exclude themselves. *Act.* 2. 39. so that if any have a mind for the thing, they may come forward *He will in no wise cast them out.* Joh. 6. 37. *being able to save to the utmost them who come to God through him,* Heb. 7. 25 and these who have long delayed, to take this matter to heart, had now the more need to look to it, lest what belongs to their peace, be hid from their eyes. But all these

words will not take effect with people, untill God pour out his Spirit from on high, *Isa.* 32. 15. that cause men approach unto God in Christ; yet we must still presse mens duty upon them, and obtest and charge them by the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, and their reckoning to him in that day, that they give the Lord no rest, untill He send out that Spirit (which he will give to them who ask it, *Luk.* 11. 13.) and cause them know what belongs unto their peace, and bring them up to their duty.

We come now to speak of the *third* thing, viz. what is previously required of these who are to perform this duty; men must not rashly, inconsiderately and ignorantly rush in upon this matter, saying, they please that device of saving sinners by Christ, and will acquiesce and rest on him for safety: often, men do deceive themselves here, and do imagine that they have done the thing. We shall therefore hold out some things pre-required in a person who is to close with Christ Jesus; which although we offer not as positive qualifications, fitting a man for Christ that way. *Isa.* 55. 1. yet they are such things as without them, a man cannot knowingly and cordially perform the duty of believing on Christ Jesus. Beside, the common principles which are to be supponed in those who live under Gospel ordinances, as the knowledge that men have immortal souls, soul and body will be united again at the last day; there is a heaven and hell, one of which, will be the everlasting lot of all men; The Old and

New

New Testament as the true Word of God, and the rule of faith and manners; Every man is by nature void of the grace of God, and is an enemy unto God, and an heir of condemnation; Reconcilination is only by the Mediator Christ Jesus; Faith unites unto him, and is the condition of the new Covenant: Holinesse is the fruit of true Faith, and is to be studied, as that without which no man shall see God: I say, beside these things, the knowledge of which is necessary. It is required of him who would believe on Christ Jesus. (1.) That he take to heart his natural condition; and here he must know some things, and also be very serious about them: I say he must know some things. As first, that as he was born a rebell and outlaw unto God, so he hath by many actual transgressions disobliged God, and ratified the forfeiture of his favour; yea, a man should know many particular instances of his rebellion on all hands, as that he is a liar, Sabbath-breaker, blasphemer, or the like, as *Paul* speaketh very particularly of himself afterwards, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. (2.) The man must know, that the wrath of God denounced in Scripture, is standing in force against these very sins whereof he is guilty, and so consequently he is the party undoubtedly against whom God (who cannot lie) hath denounced war: a man must know, that when the Scripture saith, *Cursed is he that offereth a corrupt thing unto God*, Mal. 1. 14. it speaketh against him for his superficial service performed unto God with the outward

man

man, when his heart was far off. When the word saith, *God will not hold him guiltlesse, that taketh his Name in vain*, Exod. 20. 7. the man must know, it speaketh against himself, who hath often carelesly profaned that dreadfull Name, before which all knees should bow, *Phil.* 2. 10. and which his enemies do take in vain, *Psal.* 139. 20. when the word saith, *Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently*, Jer. 48. 10 the man must know that it speaks against himself, who hath irreverently, with much wandring of heart and drowsinesse heard the Word Preached, and without sense, faith or understanding, hath often prayed before him, when the Word saith, *Wo be unto him that giveth his neighbour drink: and putteth his bottle to him, to make him drunk; also, that he may look on his nakednesse*, Hab. 2. 15. 16. the man must know that it is spoken against himself, who hath gloried in making his neighbour drunk, and that dreadfull wrath is determined by the Lord against him, according to that Scripture: when the word saith, God will judge unclean persons, *Heb.* 13. 4. and will close them out of the New Jerusalem, *Rev.* 21. 8. The man must know that the Scripture speaketh these very words against him, he being an unclean person; so that he is the person against whom the curses of the Law do directly strike. (3.) A man must know that he hath nothing of his own to procure his peace, and to set him free of the hazard under which he lyeth, because all his righteousnesse, is as an unclean thing, *Isa.* 64. 6. his prayers, his other service done

done to God, his alams deeds &c. are not paſs guilt before God, ſince they came not from a right principle in his heart, and were not performed in a right way, nor upon a right account, nor for a right end, his ſacrifices have been an abomination unto God, *Prov.* 21. 27. (4) He muſt know that as he is void of all the ſaving graces of the Spirit, as the true love of God, the true fear of his Name, Godly ſorrow for ſin, &c. ſo particularly, that he wants faith in Chriſt, who taketh burthen for all them who believe on him: untill a man know this, he will ſtill leave all his debt and burthen, without care or regard, any where elſe, before he bring it to the common cautioner.

Now not only muſt a man know theſe things, as I ſaid before, but muſt alſo very ſeriouſly take them to heart, that is to ſay, he muſt be affected with theſe things and be in ſad earneſt about them, as he uſeth to be in other caſes, wherein he uſeth to be muſt ſerious; yea, he ſhould be more in earneſt here, than in other caſes, becauſe it is of greater concernment unto him. This ſeriouſneſſe produceth (1.) A taking of ſalvation to heart more then any thing elſe. Shall men be obliged to ſeek firſt the kingdom, *Matth.* 6. 33? Is here but one thing neceſſary, *Luk*, 10, 42.? Shall *Paul* count all thing loſſe and dung for this matter, *Phil.* 3. 8.? Is a man a loſer gaining all the world, if he loſe his ſoul, *Mark* 8. 36.? Shall this be the only ground of joy that mans names are written in the book of life, *Luke* 10. 26.

Luke 10 26 And shall not men (who would be re ckoned serious) take their soul and salvation mor to heart than any thing else? *Surely* it canno fail. Let none deceive themselves. If the hazar of their sou', and ẏ salvation thereof, and how t be in favour with God, hath not gone nearer t their heart than any thing in the world beside, h cannot be presumed upon just grounds, that they ever knew sin, or God, or the everlastingnesse o his wrath aright. 2. This seriousnesse breaketh the mans heart, and sainteth the stoutnesse of it, and leadeth it out to sorrow, as one doth for a first-born, *Zech.* 12. 10. I grant their sorrow will better suit that *Scripture* afterwards, when they apprehend Christ pierced by *their* sins. 3. It leadeth the man to a selt loathing. A man taking up himselt so, cannot but loath himself for his abominations, whereby he hath destroyed himself. There is somewhat of that spirit of revenge, which is mentioned as a fruit of true Repentance, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. 4. This seriousnesse doth make the man peremptory to find relief; since it is not in himself, he dare not put off and delay his businesse as before: and this is indeed required, that he find himself so pursued and put to it, that he flee for refuge somewhere. I grant some have a higher and some a lesser degree of this serionsnesse, as we shew in the former part of this Treatise. But if we speak of the Lords ordinary way of working with those who are come to age, we say, they must very seriously take their souls estate to heart,

despairing

deſparing of help in themſelves ſince the whole need no Phyſician, but thoſe who are ſick, *Mat.* 9. 12. As for the meaſure, we plead only that which probably doth ſuppone, that a man will be induced thereby to tranſact cordially with Chriſt, on any terms he doth offer himſelf to be cloſed with.

The ſecond thing pre-required of him who would believe on Chriſt Jeſus, is, He muſt know and take to heart the way of eſcape from Gods wrath; The Spirit muſt convince him of that righteouſneſſe. Here a man muſt underſtand ſomewhat diſtinctly, that God hath deviſed a way to ſave poor loſt man by Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe perfect righteouſneſſe hath ſatisfied offended juſtice, and procured pardon and everlaſting favor to all thoſe whom he perſwadeth by this Goſpel, to accept of Gods offer, *Acts* 13. 38. 39. *Joh.* 1. 12. So that no perſon is excluded of whatſoever rank or condition, whatſoever hath been his former way, (unleſſe he be guilty of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which is a malicious hatred and rejection of the remedy appointed for ſinners, as we ſhall hear) for, all manner of ſin is forgiven unto thoſe who accept of the offer in Gods way, *Mat.* 12. 31. *He is able to ſave to the uttermoſt thoſe that come unto God through him, Heb.* 7. 25.

The third thing pre-required, is, A man muſt know, that as God hath not excluded him from the relief appointed; So he is willing to be reconciled unto men through Chriſt, and hath oblidged men to Cloſe with him through

Chriſt

Christ Jesus, and so it impropriate that salvation themselves. He not only invites all to come, *Isa.* 55. 1, 2 and welcometh all that come, as we find in the Gospel, and commendeth those who come, *Matth.* 8. 10. *Matth.* 15. 28. and chideth for not coming and closing with him, *Joh.* 5. 40. and condemneth for not closing so with him, *Joh* 3. 18. But also he commandeth all to believe on Christ, 1 *Joh* 3. 23 So as a man is not to question the Lords willingnesse to receive men, who go to Christ honestly, for God hath abundantly cleared that in Scripture; unlesse that a man know so much, he will scarcely dare to lay his heart open for that noble device of saving sinners, or adventure his own weight and stresse upon Christ Jesus.

The fourth thing pre-required, is, The man who would close with Christ Jesus, must resolve to break all covenants with hell and death, *Isai.* 28. 18. whatsoever known evil men are ingaged into, they must resolve to forgo it: for, there is no concord between Christ and Belial, 2 *Cor.* 6. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. The Lord requireth that they who would expect him to be for them, should not be for another, *Hos.* 3. 3. This is far from evangelick repentance, which I grant doth not preceed a mans closing with Christ by faith; there is little here beyond a misregard of these things unto which a man was formerly devoted, and a slighting what he was mad upon, because he seeth himself destroyed thereby; and relief now offered whereupon his heart beginneth to be more intent

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than formerly it was. After this, when Christ is lookt upon alone, his worth and beauty doth appear, so as among all the gods there is none like unto him, and he looketh out as a sufficient covering of the eyes to all who get him. Upon which the heart loveth Gods device in the new Covenant, and loveth to lay its weight upon Christ rather than any other way, bending towards him, and so the man becometh a believer. Now, I will not say that all these things whereof we have spoken, are formally, orderly and distinctly found in every person before he close with God in Christ: for, the way of the heart with Christ may be added to the four wonderful things, *Prov.* 18. 19. It is hard to trace ẏ heart in its translation from darknesse to light; yet we hold out the most orderly & likely way, to him who doth ask the way, debarring thereby ignorant and sensleſſe persons from medling; and discharging them to pretend to any interest in him whilest they remain such.

The *fourth* thing we proposed to speak to, is, The properties of this duty when rightly gone about. I shal only hint a few.

1. Believing on Christ, must be *personal*, a man himself and in his own proper person must close with Christ Jesus. The just shall live by *his* faith, *Hab.* 2. 4. This saith, that it will not suffice for a mans safety and relief, that he is in Covenant with God, as a born member of the visible Church by vertue of the parents subjection to Gods Ordinances. Neither will it suffice that

that the person had the initiating seal of Baptism added, and that he then virtually engaged to seek salvation by Christs blood, as all Infants do. Neither doth it suffice, that men are come of believing parents, their faith will not instate their children into a right to the spirituall blessings of the Covenant. Neither will it suffice that parents did in some respect engage for their children and give them away unto God: all these things do not avail. The children of the Kingdom and of godly predecessors are cast out, unless a man in his own person put out faith in Christ Jesus, and with his own heart please and acquiesce in that device of saving sinners, he cannot be saved. I grant this faith is given unto him by Christ, but certain it is, that it must be personal.

2. This duty must be *cordial* and *hearty*: *With the heart man believeth unto righteousnesse*, Rom. 10. 10. A man must be sincere and without guile in closing with Christ, judging him the only covering of the eyes, not hankering after another way. The matter must not swim only in the head or understanding; but it must be in the heart, the man not only must be perswaded that Christ is the way. but affectionatly perswaded of it, loving and liking the thing having complacency in it, so that it is all a mans desire, as *David* speaketh of the covenant, 2 *Sam* 23. 5. If a man be cordial and affectionat in any thing, surely he must be so here in this one thing that is necessary: It must not be simply a fancy in the

head

head, it muſt be a heart-buſineſſe, a ſoul buſineſſe, yea, not a buſineſſe in the outer court of affections, but in the flower of affections and in the innermoſt cabinet of the Soul, where Chriſt is formed. Shal a man be cordial in any thing, and not in this, which doth comprize all his chief intereſts, and his everlaſting ſtate within it? Shall the Lord be ſaid to rejoyce over a man as a bridegroom rejoyceth over his bride, *Iſa.* 62. and to reſt in his love with joy, *Zeph.* 3. 17. and ſhall not the heart of man go out and meet Him here? The heart or nothing; love or nothing, marriage love which goeth from heart to heart; love of eſpouſals, or nothing, *Prov.* 23:26. 1 *Cor* 13. 2. I will not ſay that there is in all, aſſoon as they believe, a prevailing ſenſible love, which maketh ſick; but there muſt be in believing a rational and kindly love, ſo well grounded and deeply engaging, that many waters cannot quench it; It is ſtrong as death, and jealouſie in it burneth as fire, *Cant.* 8. 6, 7.

The Third property or qualification of believing as it goeth out after Chriſt, it muſt be *rational.* Hereby I mean, that the man ſhould move towards God in Chriſt, in knowledge and underſtanding, taking up Gods device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt, as the Scripture doth hold it out, not fancying a Chriſt to himſelf otherwayes than the Goſpel ſpeaketh of Him, nor another way of relief by Him than the Word of God holdeth out. Therefore we find knowledge joyned to the Covenant between God and

man

man as a requisit, *Jer.* 24. 7. *Jer.* 31. 34. I mean here also, that a man be in calmnesse of spirit, and as it were, in his cold bloud in closing with Christ Jesus, not in a simple fit of affection which soon evanisheth, *Mtth.* 13. 20. nor in a distemper through some outward distresse as the people were. *Psal.* 78 34. and proved not stedfast in the covenant nor under a tentation of some outward temporary interest, as *Simon Magus* was when he believed, *Act.* 8. a man must act here rationally, as being master of himself, in some measure able to judge of the good or evil of the thing as it stands before him.

The Fourth is, Faith as it goeth out rationally, so it goeth out *resolutely*. The poor distrest people in the Gospel did must resolutely cast themselves upon Christ. This resoluteness of spirit, is in order to all difficulties that lie in the way. Violence is offered to these. The man whose heart is a shaping out for Christ Jesus, cannot say, There is a lion in the street, *Prov.* 26. 13. If he cannot have accesse by the door, he will break through the roof of the house with that man, *Luke* 5. 19. He often doth not regard that which the world calleth discretion or prudence, like *Zacheus* climbing up on a tree to see Christ, when faith was breeding in his bosome, *Luke* 19. This resolutenesse of Spirit looketh towards what inconveniences may follow, and waveth all these, like a wise builder who reckoneth the expence beforehand, *Luke* 14 28. This resolutenesse is also in order to all a mans idols,

and

and ſuch weights as would eaſily beſet him, if he did not bend after Chriſt over them all, like that blind man who did caſt his garment from him when Chriſt called him, *Mar.* 10. 50. This reſoluteneſſe in the ſoul, proceedeth from deſperate ſelf neceſſity within the man, *Acts* 16. 30. and from the ſoveraign command of God obliging the man to move towards Chriſt, 1 *Joh.* 3. 23. and from the good report gone abroad of God, that he putteth none away that come unto Him through Chriſt, *Joh.* 6. 37. but doth commend ſuch as doth adventure over the greateſt difficulties, *Mat.* 15. 28. But above all, this reſoluteneſſe doth proceed from the arm of Jehovah ſecretly, and ſtrongly drawing the ſinner towards Chriſt, *Joh.* 6. 44. I will not ſay that every one, cloſing with Chriſt in the offers of the Goſpel, hath all the foreſaid thoughts formally in his mind; yet upon ſearch, it will be found, if he be put to it, or put in mind of theſe things, they are then aloft in the ſoul.

By what is ſaid, it doth manifeſtly appear that many in the viſible Church had need to do ſomewhat further for ſecuring of their ſoul, when they come to years of diſcretion, than is found to have been done by them before, in the covenant between God and the Church, ſealed to them in Baptiſm. By what is ſaid alſo, there is a competent guard upon the free grace of God in the Goſpel, held out through Chriſt Jeſus; So as Ignorant, ſenſleſſe, profane men cannot with any ſhaddow of reaſon pretend to an intereſt in it.

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It is true, believing in Christ and closing with him as a perfect Saviour, seemeth easie and every godlesse man saith, that he believeth on Him. But they deceive themselves, since their soul hath never cordially, rationally and resolutely gone out after Christ Jesus, as we have said. There may be some wicked men have been enlightned *Heb.* 6. 4. and have found some reel in their feet *Acts* 24. 25. or in their joy, *Mat.* 13. 20. *Mark* 6. 20. But not having engaged their heart in approaching to God, *Jer.* 30. 21. have either fainten down in that common work, as their sanctuary, untill the tryal came, *Mat.* 13. 20. 21. or they return back with the dog to the vomit, from which they had in some measure escaped by the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. 21. 22. or they utterly fall away to the hatred and malicious despising and persecuting of Christ and his interests, from whence hardly can they be recovered, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5. 6. *Heb.* 10. 26,--29. which things should provoke men to be serious in this great businesse.

We come now to speak to the *fifth* thing proposed, and that is, What be the native consequents of true believing. *I* shall reduce what I will speak of them to these two, *viz.* Union with God, and communion. First then, I say when a sinner closeth with Christ Jesus, as said is, there is presently an admirable union, a strange oneness between God and the man, as the husband and wife, head and body, root and branches, are not to be reckoned two but one. So Christ, &

God in Chriſt, and the ſinner cloſing with Him by faith are one, *Eph.* 5. 30 31, 32. He that is ſo joyned unto the Lord is one ſpirit, 1 *Cor.* 6. 17. As the Father is in the Son, and Chriſt in the Father; So believers are one in the Father and the Son. They are one, as the Father and the Son are one. The Father in Chriſt, and Chriſt in Believers, that they may be made perfect in one. O what a ſtrange interweaving and indiſſoluble knot there, *Joh.* 17. 21. 22. 23,-26! Becauſe of this union, between God and the Believer, (1.) They can never hate one another, henceforth the Lord will never hate the Believer, as no man hateth his own fleſh at any time, but cheriſheth and nouriſheth it, So doth Chriſt his people, *Eph.* 5. 29. He may be angry ſo as to correct and chaſtiſe the man that is a Believer; but all he doth to him, is for his good and advantage; all the Lords paths muſt be mercy and truth to him, *Pſal.* 25. 10. all things muſt work together for good to him, *Rom.* 8. 28 On the other ſide, the Believer can never hate God maliciouſly, for, *he that is born of God ſinneth not*, ſo, *Joh.* 3. 9. For the Lord hath reſolved and ordained things ſo, that his hand ſhall undoubtedly be upon all believers for good, that they ſhall never get leave to hate Him, and be ſo plucked out of his hand. (2.) Becauſe of this union, there is a ſtrange ſympathy and fellow-feeling between God and the Believer. The Lord is afflicted with the mans affliction, He doth tenderly, carefully and ſeaſonably reſent it, as if he

were

were afflicted with it, *Isa.* 63. 9. He who touc
eth the believer, toucheth the apple of the Lor
eye, *Zech.* 2. 8. He is touched with the feeling
their infirmities, *Heb.* 4. 15. and precious
his sight is their blood. *Psal.* 116. 15. In a wor
what is done to them, is done unto him; a
what is not done unto them, is not done u
him, *Mat.* 10. 40. *Matth.* 25. 40. 45. On t
other part, The zeal of his house fitteth in t
heart of the Believer, *Psal.* 69. 9. The Lords
proach lighteth on the Believer: If it go well wi
his affairs, that is the businesse of his People.
there is a strange sympathy between God and
lievers, all by vertue of the union between the
Because of which, men should hate every thi
which would compete with him in their love a
affections, and should disdain to be slaves to
creatures, since these are the servants of the
lord and husband, and their servants through hi
What a hatefull thing for a Queen to whore wi
the servants of her Prince and Husband? It is a
a shame for a Believer to be affraid of evill ty
ings, since the Lord, with whom he is one,
lone ruleth all things, and doth whatsoever ple
eth Him in Heaven and Earth, 1 *Cor.* 3 21.
Ps. 112. 6, 7. *Ps* 115. 3.

The other great consequent of believing, is
admirable unparallel'd communion; by ver
whereof, (1.) The parties themselves do bel
each to other. The Lord is the God of his p
pel, he himself, Father, Son and Holy Gho
is their God, in all his glorious attributes,
justice as well as his mercy, his wisdom, pow

holineſſe, &c. for, he becometh the God of his people, as he often ſpeaketh in the Covenant. On the other part, The Believers are his people, in their very perſons they are his, as the Covenant doth ſpeak; They ſhall be his people, their head, their heart, their hand, &c. whatſoever they are, they are his. (2.) By vertue of this communion they have a mutuall intereſt into one anothers whole goods and gear, in as far as can be uſefull. All the Lords Word doth belong to the Believer, threatnings as well as promiſes, for their good; all his wayes, all his works of all ſorts, ſpecial communications, death, devils, even all things, in ſo far as can be uſefull, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21. 22. 23. On the other ſide, All which belongeth to the Believer, is the Lords; heritage, children, life, wife, credit, &c. all is at his diſpoſing; if any of theſe can be uſeful to him, the Believer is to forgo them, elſe he falſifieth that communion, and declareth himſelf in ſo far, unworthy of Chriſt. *Luk.* 14. 26. (3.) By vertue of this communion there ſhould be much homlineſſe and familiarity between God and the believer. The Lord may meddle with any thing which doth belong to the Believer, and do unto him what ſeemeth good to him, and the man is not to miſtake or ſay, unto God, What doſt thou? (but in ſo far as concerneth his duty) Yea, he is ſtill to ſay in every caſe, *Good is the Word and Will of the Lord.* Iſa. 38. 8. 2 King. 4. 23, 26. On the other part, The Believer may in an humble way, be homely and familiar with God in

Christ; he may come with boldness to the throne of grace; and not use a number of complements in his addresses unto God, *Heb.* 4. 16. for he is no more a stranger unto God, *Eph.* 2. 19. so that he needs not speak unto God, as one who hath acquaintance to make every hour, as many professors do; and it maketh a huge inconsistency in their Religion. The Believer also may lay open all his heart unto God, 1 *Sam.* 1. 15. and impart all his secrets unto him, and all his tentations, without fear of a mistake. The Believer also may enquire into what God doth, in so far as may concern his own duty, or in so far as may ward off mistakes of the Lords way, and reconcile it with his Word: so *Joh.* 13. 15. The Believer is a friend in this respect, as knowing what the Master doth, See *Gen.* 18. 23. &c. *Jer.* 12. 1. *Isa.* 63. 17. The Believer also may be homely with God, to go in daily with his failings, and seek Repentance, pardon and peace through Christs advocatship. *Act.* 5. 31. 1 *Joh.* 2. 1. how often in one day may the Believer plead pardon, if he intend not to mock God, or to turn grace into wantonnesse! The Lord hath commanded men to forgive seventy times seven times in one day, and hath hinted there in a parable how much more the master will forgive, *Matth.* 18. 22,--28. The Believer also may be homely to trust God with all his outward concernments, and he doth care for these things, *Matth.* 6. 30. 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. Yea, the Believer may humbly plead God to it, to make him forth-coming for him, of

all cales, as beſeemeth, and to help him to ſuitable fruit in every ſeaſon, even grace in time of need, *Heb.* 4. 16. Yea, how great things may believers ſeek from him in Chriſt Jeſus, both for themſelves and others, 1 *Joh.*5.14,15. *Joh.* 14. 13. *Iſa.* 45. 11. It is the ſhame and great prejudice of his people, that they do not improve that communion with God more than they do: Chriſt may juſtly upbraid them, that they ask nothing in his Name, *Joh.* 16. 24.

By what is ſaid, it doth appear of how great conſequence this duty of Believing is, by which a man cloſeth with Chriſt Jeſus, whom the Father hath ſealed, and given for a Covenant to the people. It is ſo honourable for God, anſwering his very deſign, and ſerving his intereſt in the whole contrivement and manifeſtation of the Goſpel: and it is ſo advantagious to men, that Satan and an evill heart of unbelief, do mightily oppoſe it, by moving objections againſt it. I ſhall hint ſome moſt ordinary.

Obj. *I am ſo baſe, worthleſs & feckleſs of my ſelf, that I think it were high preſumption for me to meddle with Chriſt Jeſus, or the Salvation purchaſed at the rate of his blood.*

A It is true, all the children of *Adam* are baſe & naughty before him, *who chargeth his Angels with folly*, Job 4. 18. All nations are leſſe than nothing and vanity before him, *Iſai.* 40. 17. There is ſuch a diſproportion between God and men, that unleſſe he himſelf had deviſed that Covenant, and of his own free will had offered ſo to tranſact with

men, it had been high treason for men or angels to have imagined, that God should have humbled himself, and become a servant, and have taken on our nature, and have united it by a personal union to the blessed God-head; and that he should have subjected himself to the shameful death of the crosse; and all this, that men, who are rebels, should be reconciled unto God, and be made eternally happy by being in his holy company for ever. But I say, all that was his own device and free choice: Yea, moreover, if God had not soveraignly commanded men so to close with him in and through Christ, *Isa.* 55. 1, 2, 3 *Matth.* 11. 28. 1 *Joh.* 3. 23. 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. no man durst have made use of that device of his. So then, although with *Abigail* I may say, Let me be but a servant, to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord, 1 *Sam.* 25 41. Yet since he hath in his holy wisdom devised that way, and knoweth how to be richly glorified in it, *Eph.* 1. 1 *Joh.* 17. 10. and hath commanded me, as I shall be answerable in the great day, to close with him in Christ, as said is: I dare not disobey, nor enquire into the reasons of his contrivements and commands, but must adventure on the business as I would not be found to frustrate the grace of God, and in a manner disappoint the Gospel *Gal.* 2. 21, and falsifie the record which God hath born of his Son, that there is life enough in him for men, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. 11. and so make God a liar, and add that rebellion to all my former transgressions.

Obje

Object. *I am a person singularly sinful, beyond any I know; Therefore I dare not presume to go near unto Christ Jesus, or look after that salvation which is through his righteousness.*

A. Is your sin beyond the drunkennes & incest of *Lot*; adultery, covered with murther, in *David*; idolatry, and horrid apostacy in *Solomon*; idolatry, murder, and witchcraft in *Manasseh*; anger against God, and his way, in *Jonah*; forswearing of Christ in *Peter*, after he was forwarned, and had vowed the contrary; bloudy persecution in *Paul*, making the Saints to blaspheme, &c. (now wo to him who is imboldned to sin by these instances recorded in Scripture, and adduced here, to the commendation of the free and rich grace of God, and to encourage poor penitent sinners to fly unto Christ) I say; are your sins beyond these? Yet all these obtained pardon through Christ, as the Scripture doth shew. Know therefore, that all sins do ly alike level before the free grace of God, who loveth freely, *Hos* 14. 4. and looketh not to lesse or more sin: If the person have a heart to come unto him, through Christ, then he is able to save to the utmost *Heb.* 7. 25. Yea, it is more provoking before God; not to close with Christ when the offer cometh to a man, than all the rest of his transgressions are: for, *he that believeth not, hath made God a liar, in that record he hath born of life in the Son; and he who doth not believe, shall be condemned, for not believing on the Son of God,*

that ſhall be the main thing in his dittie, *John* 18. So that much ſin cannot excuſe a man, if ſcar at Chriſt and ſhift his offer, ſince God ha openly declared, that this a faithfull ſaying, a worthy of all acceptation, *Chriſt came to ſave ſi ners, whereof I am chief*; even he who is *chief* ſinners in his own apprehenſion, is bound to b lieve and accept this ſaying, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15.

Object. *My ſins have ſome aggravating circu ſtances beyond the ſame ſins in other perſons, which d much terrifie me.*

A. What can thy aggravations of thy ſins be whic are not parallel'd in the fore-cited examples? thy ſin againſt great light? So behoved many theſe we ſpake of before. Was it againſt ſi gular mercies and deliverances? So was that *Lot* and *Noah* his drunkenneſſe. Was thy ſi done with much deliberation? So was *David* whileſt he wrot the Letter againſt *Uriah*. W it againſt or after any ſingular manifeſtation God? So was *Solomons*. Was it by a ſmall an deſpicable tentation? So was that of *Jonah*, an of *Peter*, if we conſider the hainouſneſſe of the tranſgreſſion. Haſt thou reiterated the ſin, an committed it over again? So did *Lot*, ſo did *P ter*, ſo ſaid *Jehoſhaphat* in joyning with *Ahab* an *Jehoram*, 1 *King.* 22. 2 *King.* 3. Are there m ny groſſe ſins concurring together in thee? S were there in *Manaſſeh*. Haſt thou ſtood ou out in rebellion (that, as all the former, is thy ſhame: But) ſo did the thief on the croſ he ſtood it out to the laſt gaſp, *Luk.* 23. 42, 4

If yet thou haſt an ear to hear, thou art commanded to hear, *Matth.* 13. 19. Although thou haſt long ſpent thy money for that which is not bread, *Iſa.* 55. 1, 2. thou haſt the greater need now to make haſte and to flee for refuge, and if thou do ſo, he ſhall welcome thee, and in on wiſe caſt thee out, *Joh* 6 37. eſpecially ſince he hath uſed no preſcription of time in Scripture. So that all thoſe aggravations of thy ſin will not excuſe thy ſhitting of the Lords offer.

Object. *In all theſe inſtances given, you have not named the particulars whereof I am guilty; Nor know I any who ever obtained mercy before God, being guilty of ſuch things as are in me.*

A. It is hard to condeſcend upon every particular tranſgreſſion which may vex ỹ conſcience; yea, leſſer ſins than ſome of thoſe I have mentioned, may hugely diſquiet, if the Lord blow the fire. But, for thy ſatisfaction, I ſhall condeſcend upon ſome truths of Scripture, which doth reach ſins and caſes more univerſally, than any man can do particularly. See *Exod.* 34. 7. God pardoneth iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin; that is, all manner of ſin. *Ezek.* 18. 21 22, 30. If a man turn from all his wickedneſſe, it ſhal no more be remembred, or prove his ruin. *Joh.* 6. 37. Him that cometh, he will in no wiſe caſt out; that is, whatſoever be his ſins, or the aggravations of them. *Joh.* 3. 16. Whoſoever believeth ſhal be ſaved; that is, without exception of any ſin, or any caſe, *Heb.* 7. 25. *He is able to ſave to the utmoſt theſe who come to God through him*: no man

can ſufficiently declare what is Gods *uttermo*
Mat. 12. 31. *All manner of ſin and blaſphemie ſh*
be forgiven unto men, that is, there is no ſort
ſin, whereof one inſtance ſhall not be forgiven
one perſon or other, except the ſin againſt th
holy Ghoſt. Theſe and the like Scriptures, d
carry all ſorts of ſin before them, ſo that, let th
ſins be what they will, or can be, they may b
ſunk in one of theſe truths, ſo as thy ſin can be
excuſe to thee for ſhifting the offer of peace an
ſalvation through Chriſt, ſince any man who wil
is allowed to come and take, *Rev* 22. 17. we wil
not multiply words. The great God of heave
and earth hath ſoveraignly commanded all wh
ſee their need of relief, to betake themſelves un
to Chriſt Jeſus, and to cloſe cordially with God
device of ſaving ſinners by him, laying aſide al
objections and excuſes, as they ſhall be anſwe
rable unto him in the day he ſhall judge the quic
and dead, and ſhall drive away out of his preſenc
all theſe who would dare to ſay, their ſins un
condition were ſuch, as that they durſt not adven
ture upon Chriſts perfect righteouſneſſe for thei
relief, notwithſtanding of the Lords own com
mand often interpoſed, and in a manner his cre
dit engaged.

Object. I *ſuſpect* I *am guilty of the ſin againſt th*
Holy Ghoſt, and ſo am incapable of pardon, and there
fore I *need not think of believing on Chriſt Jeſus fo*
ſaving of my ſoul.

A. Although none ſhould charge this ſin on the
ſelves, or on others, unleſſe they can prove and
inſtruc

inſtruct the change according to Chriſts example *Matth.* 12. 5. 26,-32. yet for ſatisfying of the doubt, I ſhall (1.) ſhew what is not the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, properly ſo called, becauſe there be ſome groſſe ſins which people do unwarrantably judge to be this unpardonable ſin. (2.) I ſhall ſhew what is the ſin again the Holy Ghoſt. (3.) I ſhall draw ſome concluſions in anſwer directly to the Objection.

As for the firſt, There be many groſſe ſins, which although (as all other ſins) they be ſins againſt the Holy Ghoſt, who is God equal and one with the *Father* and the Son, and are done againſt ſome of his operations and motions, yet they are not *the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, which is the unpardonable ſin As firſt, blaſpheming of God under bodily tortures, is not that ſin; for, ſome Saints fell into this, *Act.* 26 11. much leſſe, blaſpheming of God in a fit of frenzie, for, a man is not a free rational agent at that time; and he that ſpareth his people, as a father doth his ſon that ſerveth him and doth pity. So, *Mal.* 3. 17. *Pſal* 103. 13. doth he ſpare and pity in theſe rovings; for ſo would our fathers according to the fleſh do, if we blaſphemed them in a fit of diſtraction; much leſſe are horrid blaſphemies againſt God, darted in upon the ſoul and not allowed there; this unpardonable ſin, for ſuch things were offered to Chriſt, *Matth.* 4. and are often caſt in upon the Saints. (2.) The hating of good in others, whilſt I am not convinced that it is good, but in my light do judge it to be evil;

yea, the speaking against it, yea, the Persecutin of it in that case, is not the sin against the Ho Ghost; for, all these will be found in *Paul* b fore he was converted, and he obtained merc because he did these things ignorantly. (Heart-rising at the thriving of others in the wor and way of God, whilst I love it in my self; ye the rising of heart against providence, which o ten expresseth it self against the creatures neare our hand, yea, this rising of heart intertaine and maintained, (although they be horrid thing leading towards that unpardonable sin, yet) ar not that sin; for these may be in the Saint proceeding from self-love, which cannot endur to be darkned by another, and proceeding fro some crosse in their idol under a fit of tentatio the most part of all this was in *Jonah*, *Jonah*. (4.) Not only are decayes in what once was i the man, and falling into grosse sins against ligh after the receiving of the truth. This unpardo able sin, (for then many of all the Saints in Scri pture were undone) But further, apostacie fro much of the truth, is not that sin; for, what was i *Solomon*, and in the Church of *Corinth* and *Ga latia*; yea, denying, yea, forswearing of th most fundamental truth under a great tentation, is not this sin; for then, *Peter* had been undone. (5.) As resisting, quenching, grieving and vex ing of the Spirit of God by many sinfull wayes, ar not this unpardonable sin, for they are charged with these who are called to Repentance in Scri pture, and not shut out, as guilty of this sin: So neithe

neither reiterating ſin againſt light, is the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, although it leadeth towards it; for ſuch was *Peters* ſin in denying Chriſt; ſo was *Jehoſhaphats* ſin in joyning with *Ahab* and *Jehoram*. (6.) Purpoſes and eſſayes of ſelf murther, and even purpoſes of murthering Godly men, (the party being under a ſad fit of tentation) yea, actual ſelf murther, (although probably it often joineth in the iſſue with this unpardonable ſin, which ought to make every ſoul look upon ẏ very tentation to it with horrour and abhorrency, yet) is not the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt: The Jaylor intended to kill himſelf upon a worſe account than many poor people do in the ſight and ſenſe of Gods wrath, and of their own ſin and corruption; yet that Jaylor obtained pardon, *Act.* 16. 27. 34. And *Paul* before his effectual calling, was acceſſory to the murther of many Saints, and intended to kill moe, as himſelf granteth. *Act* 26. 9, 10, 11, 12. Although all theſe are dreadful ſins, each of them deſerving wrath everlaſting, and not being repented of, bringeth endleſſe vengeance, eſpecially the laſt cuts off hope of relief, for ought can be expected in an ordinary way, yet none of theſe is the unpardonable ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt; and ſo under any of theſe, there is hope to him that hath an ear to hear the joyfull ſound of the Covenant; All manner of ſuch ſin & blaſphemie may be forgiven, as is clear in the Scripture, where theſe things are mentioned.

As for the ſecond thing. Let us ſee what the

ſin

sin against the holy Ghost is. It is not a simple act of transgression but a complex of many mischievous things, involving soul and body ordinarly in guilt. We thus describe; *It is an ...jecting and opposing of the chief Gospel-truth and way of salvation, made out singularly to a man by the spirit of God in the truth and good thereof, and that avowedly, freely, wilfully, malicously and despightfully, breeding hopelesse fear.* There be three places of Scripture, which do speak most of this sin, and thence we will prove every part of this description, in so far as may be useful to our present purpose, by which it will appear that none who have a mind for Christ, need stumble at what is spoken of this sin in Scripture. *See Mat.* 12. 24. 32. *Heb.* 6. 4. 5. 6. *Heb.* 10. 25. 29. First then, let us consider the object about which this sin, or sinfull acting of the man guilty thereof, is conversant, and that is the chief Gospel-truth and way of salvation; both which run to one thing, *It* is the way which God hath contrived for saving of sinners by Jesus Christ the promised Messiah and Saviour; by which death and righteousnesse men are to be saved, as He hath held forth in the Ordinances confirming the same by many mighty works in Scripture tending there away. This way of salvation is the object. The Pharisees oppose this, that Christ was the Messiah, *Mat.* 12. 23, 24. The wrong is done against the Son of God, *Heb.* 6. 6. and the bloud of the covenant, and the Spirit graciously offering to apply these things, *Heb.* 10. 29.

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Secondly, In the description, consider the qualification of this object. It is singularly made out to the party by the Spirit of God, both in the truth and good thereof. This saith (1.) that there must be knowledge of the truth and way of Salvation. The Pharisees knew that Christ was the heir, *Mat.* 21.38. The party hath knowledge, *Heb.* 10.26. (2.) That knowledge of the thing must not swim only in the head, but there must be some halt-heart perswasion of it. Christ knew the Pharisees thoughts and so did Judge them, *Mat.* 12. 25. and that the contrary of what they spake was made out upon their heart. There is a tasting, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5. which is beyond simple enlightning; yea, there is such a perswasion ordinarily as leadeth to a deal of outward sanctification, *Heb.* 10. 29 (3.) This perswasion must not only be of the verity of the thing, but of the good of it. The party tasteth the good word of God, and he apprehendeth the things as eligible, *Heb.* 6. 5. (4.) This perswasion is not made out only by strength of argument, but also by an enlightning work of Gods Spirit shining on the truth, and making it conspicuous. There is that sin called *the sin against the holy Ghost*, *Matth* 12. *Mark.* 3. The persons are said to have received the holy Ghost, *Heb.* 6. 4. and to do despight unto the Spirit of grace, who was in the neareſt step of a gracious operation with them; *Heb.* 10 29. Thirdly in this description, consider the acting of the party against the object so qualified. It is a rejecting and

and oppoſing of it: which importeth, (1.) That men have once, ſome way at leaſt, been in hand with it, or had the offer of it, as is true of the phariſees. (2.) That they do reject, even with contempt what they had of it, or in their offer. The Phariſees deny it, and ſpeak diſdainfully of Chriſt, *Matth* 12. 24. They fall away intending to ſhame Chriſt, *Heb.* 6. 5. 6. (3.) The men ſet themſelves againſt it by the ſpirit of perſecution, as the Phariſees did ſtill. They rail againſt it: Therefore it is called, *Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, Mat. 12. 24. 31. They would crucifie Chriſt again, if they could, *Heb.* 6. 6 They are adverſaries, *Heb.* 10. 27 Fourthly, Conſider the properties of this acting (1.) It is *avowed*, that is, not ſeeking to ſhelter or hide it ſelf. The Phariſees ſpake againſt Chriſt publickly, *Matth.* 12. 24. They would have Chriſt brought to an *open ſhame*, Heb 6, 6. They forſake the Ordinances which favour that way, *Heb* 10. 25. and deſpiſe the danger: for, looking for indignation, they trample that bloud ſtill, *Heb.* 10. 27. 29. (2.) The party acteth *freely*, it is not from unadviſedneſſe, nor from force or conſtraint, but an acting of free choiſe; nothing doth force the Phariſees to ſpeak againſt and perſecut Chriſt. They crucifie, *to themſelves*, they re-act the murder of their own free accord, and in their own boſom, none conſtraining them, *Heb.* 6 6. They ſin of free choiſe, as the word is, *ſpontaneouſly*, *Heb.* 10. 27. (3.) It is acted *willfully*. They are ſo reſolute they will not be diſwaded by any offers

offer, or the moſt precious means, as is clear in the foreſaid Scriptures. (4.) It is done *maliciouſly*, ſo as it proceeds not ſo much, if at all, from a tentation to pleaſure, profit, or honour; It proceedeth not from fear, or force, or from any good end propoſed; but out of heart-malice againſt God and Chriſt, and the advancement of his Glory and Kingdom. So that it is of the very nature of Satans ſin, who hath an irreconciliable hatred againſt God, and the remedy of ſin, becauſe his glory is thereby advanced This is a ſpecial ingredient in this ſin. The Phariſees are found guilty of heart-malice againſt Chriſt, ſince they ſpeak ſo againſt him, and not againſt their own children caſting out devils; and this is the force of Chriſts argument, *Matth.* 12. 27. They do their outmoſt to crucifie Chriſt again, and to bring him to an open ſhame, *Heb.* 6. 6. They are adverſaries like the devil, *Heb*, 10. 27 (5.) It is done *deſpightfully*. The malice muſt bewray it ſelf. The Phariſees muſt proclaim that Chriſt hath correſpondence with devils, *Mat.* 12. He muſt be put to an open ſhame, and crucified again, *Heb.*6. They muſt tread under foot that bloud, and do deſpight to the Spirit, *Heb.* 10. 29. So that the party had rather periſh a thouſand times, than be in Chriſts debt for ſalvation. The laſt thing in the deſcription, is, the ordinary attendant or conſequence of this ſin; it breedeth *deſperate and hopeleſſe fear*. They fear him, whom they hate, with a ſlaviſh hopeleſſe fear, ſuch as devils have, *Heb.* 10. 27. They know

that

that God will put out his power againſt the
they tremble in the remembrance of it ; And
they could be above him, and deſtroy him, t
covet it ; and ſince they cannot reach that t
hate with the utmoſt of heart-malice, and
perſecute him and all that is his with deſpig

As for the third thing propoſed, *viz.* the co
cluſions to be drawn from what is ſaid, where
we will ſpeak directly to the objection. (1.) a
I hinted before. ſince the ſin againſt the Ho
Ghoſt is ſo remarkable, and may be well know
where it is. none ſhould charge themſelves wit
it, unleſſe they can prove and inſtruſt the charge:
for it is a great wrong done unto God, to labou
to perſwade my ſoul that he wil never pardon me:
it is the very way to make me deſperate, and t
lead me unto the unpardonable ſin ; Therefore
unleſſe thou can, and dare ſay, that thou do
hate the way which God hath deviſed for ſavi
of ſinners, and doſt reſolve to oppoſe the thrivi
of his kingdom both with thy ſelf and others, o
of malice and deſpight againſt God, thou ough
not to ſuſpect thy ſelf guilty of this ſin. (2.)
Whatſoever thou haſt done againſt God, if tho
doſt rue it, and wiſh it were undone, thou ca
not be guilty of this ſin ; for in it, heart-mali
and deſpight againſt God do ſtill prevail. (3.)
If thou art content to be his debtor for pardon,
would be infinitly obliged unto him for it, the
thou cannot in that caſe be guilty of the ſin againſ
the Holy Ghoſt ; for, as we ſhew before, the
who are guilty of it, do ſo deſpight God that the
would

would not be his debtors for ſalvation. (4.) Whatſoever thou haſt done, if thou haſt a deſire after Jeſus Chriſt, and doeſt look with a ſore heart after him, and cannot think of parting with his bleſſed company for ever; or if thou muſt ſhed with him, yet doſt wiſh well to him, and all his, thou needeſt not ſuſpect thy ſelf to be guilty of this unpardonable ſin; for there can be no ſuch hatred of him in thy boſome, as is neceſſarily required to make up that ſin. (5.) If thou would be above the reach of that ſin, and ſecure againſt it for ever, then go work up thy heart to pleaſe ſalvation by Chriſt Jeſus, and to cloſe with God in him, acquieſcing in him as the ſufficient ranſome and reſt, as we have been preſſing before; and yeeld to him to be ſaved in his way: do this in good earneſt, and thou ſhalt be for ever put out of the reach of that ugly thing wherewith Satan doth affright ſo many poor ſeekers of God.

Object. *Although I be not excluded from the benefit of the new Covenant, yet it is not in my power to believe upon Chriſt, for faith is the gift of God, and above the ſtrength of fleſh and blood.*

A. It is true that ſaving faith, by which alone a man can heartily cloſe with God in Chriſt, is above our power, and is the gift of God, as we ſaid before in the premiſſes, Yet remember, (1.) The Lord hath left it as a duty upon all who hear this Goſpel, cordially by faith to cloſe with his offer of ſalvation through Chriſt, as is clear in the Scripture: and you muſt know, that although it be not in our power to perform that duty of our ſelves

ſelves, yet the Lord may juſtly condemn for no
performing of it, and we are inexcuſable, becau
at firſt he made man perfectly able to do whatſo
ever he ſhould command. (2.) The Lord com
manding this thing, which is above our powe
willeth us to be ſenſible of our inability to do th
thing, and wou'd have us putting it on him t
work it in us: He hath promiſed to give the ne
heart, and he hath not excluded any from the be
nefit of that promiſe. (3.) The Lord uſeth b
theſe commands and invitations, and mens me
ditations on the ſame, & their ſupplication abou
the thing, to convey power unto the ſoul to per
form the duty: Therefore, for anſwer to the ob
jection. I do obteſt thee in the Lords Name t
lay to heart theſe his Commandements and pro
miſes, and meditate on them, and upon that ble
ſed buſineſſe of the new Covenant. and pray un
to God as you can over them, (for he will b
enquired to do theſe things, *Ezek.* 36. 37. an
lay thy cold heart to that device of God expre
in the Scriptures, and unto Chriſt Jeſus, wh
is given for a covenant to the people, and loo
to him, for life and quickning; go and eſſay t
pleaſe that ſalvation in the way God doth offer i
and to cloſe with, and reſt on Chriſt for it, as
all were in thy power, yet looking to him f
the thing, as knowing that it muſt come fro
him; and if thou do ſo, he who meets theſe wh
remember him in his wayes, *Iſa* 64. 5. will no
be wanting on his part, and thou ſhalt not hav
ground to ſay, that thou moved towards the thin
until

untill thou could do no more for want of ſtrength, and ſo left it at Gods door: It ſhall not fail on his part, if thou have a mind for the buſineſſe; yea, I may ſay, if by all thou haſt ever heard of that matter, thy heart loveth it, and deſireth to be in hands wth it, thou haſt it already performed within thee, ſo that difficulty is paſt, before thou was awar of it.

Object. *Many who have cloſed with Chriſt Jeſus, as ſaiais, are ſtill complaining of their leanneſs and fruitleſneſs, which maketh my heart lay the leſs weight on that duty of believing.*

A If you be convinced y^t it is a duty to believe on Chriſt, as ſaid is, you may not ſhift it under any pretence. As for theſe complaints of ſome who have looked after him, not admitting every one to be judge of his own fruit. *I* ſay, (1.) Many by their jealouſies of Gods love and by their misbelief (after they have ſo cloſed with God) do obſtruct many precious commnnications, which otherwiſe would be let out to them, *Matth.* 13. 58. (2.) It cannot be that any whoſe heart is gone out after Chriſt, have found him a wilderneſſe, *Jer.* 2. 31. ſurely they find ſomewhat in their ſpirit ſwaying them towards God in theſe two great things, *viz* how to be found in him in that day, *Philip.* 3. 8, 9 and how to be forthcoming to his praiſe in the land of the living, *Pſal.* 119 17. *Pſal.* 56. 12. they find theſe two things aloft in the ſoul, and that is much; Moreover, they ſhal after ſearch, if they judge ought, find ever ſince an emptineſſe in the creatures, which abundance

dance of the creature cannot fill up, all is vanity; unto only God can fill up the empty room in their heart, and when he but breatheth a little, there is no room for additional comfort from creature this faith, that God hath captivate the man hath fixed that saving principle in the understanding and heart, who is God but the Lord? *Worship him all ye gods*, *Ps.* 97. 7. yea, further, there whose heart hath closed with God in Christ, as said is, will not deny that there have been seasonable preventings & quicknings now & then, when the soul was like to fail; *Psal.* 21. 3. *Psal.* 94 18, 19. therefore, let none say, that there is no fruit following, and let none shitt their duty upon the unjust and groundlesse complaints of others.

Object. *Although I judge it my duty to close with Gods device in the Covenant, I am in the dark how to manage that duty, for sometimes God doth offer to our God without any mention of Christ, and sometimes faith, that he will betroth us unto him; and in other places of Scripture, we are called to Come to Christ and he is the Bridegroom. Again, God sometimes speaketh of himself as a Father to men, sometimes as a husband: Christ is sometimes called the husband, and sometimes a brother, which relations seem inconsistent and do much put me in the dark how to apprehend God when my heart would agree with him, and close with him.*

A. It may be very well said, That men do come to God, or close with him, and yet they come not Christ and close with him. They may be [illegible] to come under a marriage-relation unto God, and unto

unto Chriſt alſo, who is husband, father, brother; &c. to them, & there is no ſuch myſtery here as ſome do conceive. For the better understanding of it, conſider theſe few things. (1.) Although God made man perfect at the beginning, and put him in ſome capacity of tranſacting with him immediatly, *Eccl.* 7. 29. *Gen.* 2. 16. 17. yet man, by his fall, did put himſelf at a perfect diſtance with God, and in an utter incapacity to bargain or deal any more with him immediatly. (2.) The Lord did, after *Adams* fall, make manifeſt the new Covenant, in which he did ſignifie that he was content to tranſact with man again, in and through a Mediator; and ſo did appoint men to come to him through Chriſt, *Heb.* 7. 25. and to look for acceptation only in him, *Eph.* 1. 6. ordaining men to hear Chriſt, he being the only party, in whom God was well pleaſed, *Mat.* 17. 5. (3.) This matter is ſo clear, and ſupponed to be ſo nottour in the Scripture, and ſo manifeſt to all who are under the Ordinances, That the Lord doth often ſpeak of tranſacting with himſelf, not making mention of the Mediator; becauſe it is ſupponed, that every one in the Church knoweth that now there is no dealing with God, except by and through Chriſt Jeſus the mediator. (4.) Conſider that Chriſt Jeſus, God-man is not only a fit tryſting-place for God and men to meet into, and a fit ſpokeſman to treat between the parties now at varience, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. But we may ſay alſo, He is immediate Bridegroome, and ſo our cloſing or tranſacting with God, may be juſt-

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ly called the marriage of the Kings son; and th
Elect may be called, *the Lambs wife*, Christ Je
sus being, as it were, the hand which God hold
eth out unto men, and on which they lay hol
when they deal with God. And so through an
by Christ, we close with God, as our God, or
whom our soul doth terminate lastly and ultima
ly through Christ, 1 *Pet.* 1. 21. (5.) Conside
that the diverse relations mentioned in Scripture
are set down, to signifie the sure and indissolubl
union and communion between God and his Peo
ple: whatsoever nearnesse is between head an
members, root and branches, king and subject
shepherd and flock, father and children, brothe
and brother, husband and wife, &c. all is here
John 17. 21, 22, 23, 26. So that whatsoever b
spoken in Scripture, people may be clear, tha
God calleth them to be reconciled unto hi
through Christ, and doth offer himself to be thei
God and husband in him alone; And men are t
accept God to be their God in Christ, pleasin
that way of relief for poor men, and to give u
themselves unto God in Christ, in whom alon
they can be accepted. And they who close wit
Christ, they do close with God in him, whoi
in Christ reconciling the world to himself, 2 *Co*
5. 19. *Joh.* 14 8, 9, 10, 11. And we are not n
dip further into the diverse relations mentione
in Scripture, between God, or Christ, and me
than as they may point out union and commu
nion, or nearnesse with God through Christ Jesu
and our advantage thereby.

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Theſe things being clear, we will not multiply words. But, ſince to believe on Chriſt is the great duty, required of all that hear this Goſpel, we obteſt every one, in the Lords Name, to whom the report of this ſhall come, that without delay they take to heart their loſt condition in themſelves, and that they lay to heart the relief which God hath provided by Jeſus Chriſt, whereof he hath made a free offer unto all who will be content of the ſame, and to be ſaved that way. And that they lay to heart, that there is no other way of eſcape from the wrath that is to come (becauſe of which man would be glad at the laſt day, to run into a lake of melted lead to be hid from the face of the Lamb, whom they do here deſpiſe) We ſay, we obteſt all in the conſideration of theſe things, to work up their hearts to this buſineſſe, and to lay themſelves open for God, and to receive him through Chriſt in the offers of the Goſpel, acquieſcing in him, as the only deſirable and ſatisfying good, that ſo they may ſecure themſelves; go ſpeedily and ſearch for His offers of peace and ſalvation in the Scripture, and work up your heart and ſoul to cloſe with them, and with Chriſt in them, and with God in Chriſt, and do it ſo, as you may have this to ſay, that you were ſerious, and in earneſt, and cordial here, as ever you were in any thing to your apprehenſion; and for ought you know, Chriſt is the choiſe of your heart; at leaſt you neither know nor allow any thing to the contrary: whereupon your heart doth appeal unto God to ſearch

and

and try if there be ought amisse, to rectifie it, and lead unto the right way. Now this cleaving of the heart unto him, and casting it self upon him to be saved in his way, is believing, which doth indeed secure a man from the wrath that is to come, because now he hath received Christ, and believeth on him, and so shall not enter into condemnation, as saith the Scripture.

Object. *When I hear what it is to believe on Christ Jesus, I think sometimes I have faith: for I dare say to my apprehension, I please the invention of salving sinners by Christ Jesus, my heart goeth out after him and doth terminate upon him as a satisfying treasure, and I am glad to accept God to be my God in him. But I often do question if ever I have done so, and so do for the most part, kept hesitating and doubting, if I do believe, or be savingly in Covenant with God.*

Answ.

Expresse transacting with God. It is ordinary for many whose hearts have gone out after Christ in the Gospel, and have received him, to bring the same in question again. Therefore I shall advise one thing as a notable help to fix the soul, in the maintaining faith and an interest in God; and that is, That men not only close heartily with God in Christ, as said is, but also, that they *expresly, explicitly, by word of mouth and voice, and formally close with Christ Jesus, and accept of Gods offer of salvation through him, and so make a Covenant with God.* And this, that Gods blessing may contribute not a little to the establishing them anent their saving interest in God.

Before

Before I speak directly to this expresse covenanting with God, I premise these few things. (1.) I do not here intend a covenanting with God, essentially differing from the Covenant between God and the visible Church, as the Lord doth hold it out in his revealed Will. Neither do I intend a Covenant, differing essentially from that transacting of the heart with God in Christ, formerly spoken unto; It is that same Covenant; only it differeth by a singular circumstance, *viz.* the *formal expression* of the thing which the heart did before practice. (2.) I grant this expresse covenanting and transacting with God, is not absolutely necessary for a mans salvation; for, if any person close heartily and sincerely with God, offering himself in Christ in the Gospel, his soul and state is thereby secured according to the Scripture, although he utter not words with his mouth: But this expresse verbal covenanting with God, is very expedient, for the better being of a mans state, and his more comfortable maintaining of an interest in Christ Jesus. (3.) This expresse covenanting with God by word of mouth, is of no worth, without sincere heart-closing with God in Christ joyned with it: for, without that, it is but a prophaning of the Lords Name, and a mocking of him to his face, so to draw near unto him with the lips, whilest the heart is far away from him. (4.) I grant, both cordial and verbal transacting with God will not make out a mans gracious estate unto him, so as to put and keep it above

controverſie, without the joynt witneſſe of the Spirit, by which we know what is freely given unto us of God, yet this explicite way of tranſacting with God, joyned with that heart cloſing with him in Chriſt, contributes much for clearing up unto a man, that there is a fixed bargain betwee God and him, and will do much to ward off him many groundleſſe jealouſies and objections of a unſtable mind and heart, which uſeth affrontedly to deny this hour, what it did really act an perform the former hour. This explicite covenanting, is as an Inſtrument taken of what pa between God and the ſoul, and ſo hath its ow advantage for ſtrengthning of faith.

As for this expreſſe covenanting, we ſhall (1. ſhew that is is a very warrantable practice. (2. We ſhal ſhew ſhortly what is preparatorily requred of thoſe who do ſo tranſact with God. (3. How men ſhall go about that duty. (4.) Wh ſhould follow thereupon.

As to the *firſt*, I ſay, it is a warrantable practic and an incumbent duty, expreſly and by word covenant with God. Which appeareth thus;

1. In many places of Scripture (if we look what they may bear according to their ſcope an the analogy of faith) God hath commanded and left it on people as a duty, *Iſa.* 44. 5. *One ſ ſay, I am the Lords.* Iſa. 45. 54. *Surely ſhall ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſſe and ſtreng* Jeremiah 3. 4. *Wilt thou not cry unto me, My fath thou art the guide of my youth.* Zech. 13. 9. *Th ſhall ſay, The Lord is my God.* Hoſea 2. 16. *Th*

ſhalt call me Iſhi; and in many places elſe where. Now ſince God hath ſo clearly left it on men in the letter of the Word, they may be perſwaded, that it is a practice warranted and allowed by him, and well pleaſing unto him.

2. *Arg.* It is the approven practice of the Saints in Scripture, thus expreſly to covenant with God, and they have found much quiet in that duty afterwards. *David* did often expreſly ſay unto God, that he was his God, his portion, and that himſelf was his ſervant. *Thomas* will put his intereſt out of queſtion with it, *Joh.* 20. 28. Yea, I ſay, the Saints are much quieted in remembrance of what is paſt that way between God and them. *Pſal.* 73. 25. *Pſal.* 142. 5. we find it often in the book of the *Canticles*. Now ſhall the chief worthies of God be ſo much in a duty, breeding ſo much quiet and ſatisfaction to them in many caſes, and ſhall we be under the New Teſtament, unto whom acceſſe is miniſtred abundantly, and who partake of the ſap of the Olive; ſhall we (I ſay) ly behind in this approven piece of homlineſſe with God? Since we ſtudy to imitate that cloud of witneſſes in other things, as faith, zeal, patience, &c. let us alſo imitate them in this.

3. *Arg.* The thing about which we move here, it is a matter of the greateſt ooncernment in all the world: It is the life of our ſoul, *Deut.* 32. 47. Oh ſhall men ſtudy to be expreſſe, explicite, plain and peremptory in all their other great buſineſſes, becauſe they are ſuch, and ſhall they

not much more be peremptory and expresse in this, which doth most concern them? I wonder that many not only do not speak it with their mouth, but that they do not swear and subscribe it with their hand, and do not every thing for securing of God to themselves in Christ, and themselves unto God, which the Scripture doth warrant, *Isa* 44 5.

This also may have its own weight, as an argument to presse this way of covenanting with God. The businesse of interest in Christ, and of real and honest transacting with Him, is a thing, which in the experience of Saints, is most frequently brought upon debate and in question. Therefore men had need, all the wayes they can even by thought, word and deed to put it to a point

This also may have place here for pressing this as a duty, that God is so formal, express, distinct and legal, (to say so) in all the businesse of man's Salvation, *viz.* Christ must be a near kinsman, to whom the right of redemption doth belong; He must be chosen, called, authorized and sent: Covenants formally drawn between the Father and Him: The Father accepting payment and satisfaction, giving formal discharges, all done clearly and expresly. Shall the Lord be so express, plain and peremptory in every part of the business, and shal our part of it rest in a confused thought, and we be as dumb beasts before him; If it were a marriage between man and wife, it would not be judged enough, although there were consent in heart

heart given by the woman, and known to the man, if she did never express so much by word, being in a capacity to do so. Now this Covenant between God and man, is held out in Scripture as a marriage between man and wife; *Hos.* 2. 19, 20. 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. The whole Song of *Solomon* speaketh it. The Lord useth similitudes to signifie unto us what he intends: and surely this is a speciall requisite in marriage, that the wife give an express and explicite consent unto the business: The man saith; so I take thee to be my lawful wife, and do oblige my self to be a dutiful husband. The woman is obliged on the other part, to express her consent and to say, Even so I take thee to be my lawful husband: and do promise duty and subjection. It is so here. The Lord saith; I do betroth thee unto me in faithfulnes and thou shalt call me *Ishi*, my husband, *Hos.* 2. I will be for thee as a head and husband if thou wilt not be for another, *Hos.* 3. The man ought to answer, and say, *Amen.* So be it. Thou shalt be my God, my Head and Lord, and *I* shal and will be thine, and not for another, *Cant.* 6. 3. And so this making of the Covenant with God, is called, a giving of the hand to him, as the word is, 2 *Chron.* 30. 8 which doth hint a very express, formal, explicite and positive bargaining with God. So then, we conclude it to be an incumbent duty, and a very approven practice, necessary for the quyeting of mans mind, and his more comfortable being in Covenant with God, and more fully answearing Gods condescendency and offer in that

great and primary promise, I
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send out their heart after him,
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we find *Joshua* doing so, when
the land of *Canaan* in the midst

[illegible] straits, *Psal* 50. 1. 2. When [illegible] God to be at a distance from [illegible] to be under withering and [illegible] is safest heartily to close with [illegible] him by faith for the securing [illegible] re good to put it out of que- [illegible] expression of the thing; this is the [illegible] ap from Christ the root, for [illegible] the Soul, and for establishing the [illegible] The Spouse in the song of *So-* [illegible] asserting her interest in him [illegible] condition, professing and avowing [illegible] d *Cant.* 5 4 At the celeb. a- [illegible] rds Supper, men should thus cor- [illegible] God in Christ, and speak and [illegible] n; for that is a feast of love, & then [illegible] ander a solemn profession of [illegible] n Christ personally and open- [illegible] eive the seal of it: It is therefore [illegible] ime, to bring up both heart [illegible] d and answer our profession, [illegible] God to be our God, and resigning [illegible] e his, and at his disposing. We [illegible] ine the Lords people to times and [illegible] du[illegible]; the Lord may bind it upon [illegible] leasure; only there is hazard, that by [illegible] s covenanting with God, men [illegible]; therefore, it is not so fit that [illegible] ordinarily at full length renew that [illegible] on with God, but rather to de- [illegible] od, that they adhere unto the Cove- [illegible] n, and that they do maintain

great and primary promiſe, I *will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people.*

Not only, may and ſhould people thus expreſly cloſe with God in Chriſt for fixing their heart, but they may, upon ſome occaſions, renew this verbal tranſaction with God; eſpecially, when through tentations they are made to queſtion if ever they have really and ſincerely cloſed Covenant w God: as they are then to put new acts of faith embracing Chriſt as the deſirable portion and treaſure, and alſo upon other occaſions, ſo were it expedient; eſpecially if there remain any doubt anent the thing, that by vive voice and expreſs word, they determine that controverſie, and ſay of the Lord and to him, that he is their refuge and portion, *Pſal.* 9. 1.2. *Pſ.* 142. we find the Saints doing ſo; & we may imitate them; eſpecially, 1. In the time of great back ſliding, people were wont to renew the Covenant with God, and we ſhould do ſo alſo; our heart ſhould go out after Chriſt in the promiſes of reconciliation with God, for he is our peace upon all occaſions, and our Advocate, and we are bound to apprehend him ſo, when we tranſgreſs, 1 *John* 2.1. & to expreſs ſo much by word as the Saints did in their formal renewing of the Covenant. 2. When people are in hazard, and difficulties are preſent or foreſeen, then it were good that they ſhould ſend out their heart after him, and expreſs their adhering unto him, for ſecuring their own heart, we find *Joſhua* doing ſo, when he was to ſettle in the land of *Canaan* in the midſt of ſnares, *Joſh.* 24.

ſo

ſo *David* doth in his ſtraits, *Pſal.* 57. 1. 3. When men apprehend God to be at a diſtance from them; and their ſoul to be under withering and decay, then it is ſafeſt heartily to cloſe with Chriſt, and embrace him by faith for the ſecuring of the ſoul, and it were good to put it out of queſtion, by the expreſſion of the thing; this is the ready way to draw ſap from Chriſt the root, for recovering of the Soul, and for eſtabliſhing the heart before him. The Spouſe in the ſong of *Solomon* doth ſo, thus aſſerting her intereſt in him when in ſuch a condition, profeſſing and avowing him to be her beloved *Cant.* 5 4 At the celebration of the Lords Supper, men ſhould thus cordially cloſe with God in Chriſt, and ſpeak and expreſs ſo much; for that is a feaſt of love, & then and there we come under a ſolemn profeſſion of cloſing with God in Chriſt perſonally and openly, and do receive the ſeal of it: It is therefore beſeeming, at that time, to bring up both heart and tongue to ſecond and anſwer our profeſſion, apprehending God to be our God, and reſigning over our ſelves to be his, and at his diſpoſing. We ſhall not confine the Lords people to times and ſeaſons of this duty; the Lord may bind it upon them at his pleaſure; only there is hazard, that by too frequent expreſs covenanting with God, men turn too formal in it; therefore, it is not ſo fit that people ſhould ordinarily at full length renew that explicite tranſaction with God, but rather to declare unto God, that they adhere unto the Covenant made with him, and that they do maintain

and will never revoke nor recall the ſame; and withall, they may hint the ſum of it, in laying claim unto God in Chriſt, as their own God; and this they may do often, even in all their addreſſes to God, and probably this is the thing deſigned by the Saints in their ſo ordinary practice in Scripture, whilſt they aſſert their Intereſt in God, as their God and Portion; and it is fit, that men in all their walk, hold their heart at the buſineſſe, by heart cleaving to God in Chriſt. *The life we live in the fleſh, ſhould be by faith in the Son of God*, Gal. 2.20.

And to the *ſecond* thing, *viz.* what is preparatorily required of him who is expreſly to tranſact with God here, beſide what we ſpake before, as previous to a mans cloſing with Chriſt Jeſus, we only add, 1. That he who would explicitly bargain with God, muſt know, that to do ſo, is warranted and allowed by God, as we ſhew before: if this be wanting, a man cannot do it in faith and ſo it will be ſin unto him, *Rom.* 14.23. 2. The man muſt labor to bring up his heart to the thing, that it do not belie the tongue: It will be a great mocking of God, ſo to draw near him with the lips, whilſt the heart is far off from him, *Iſa.* 29. 13.

The *third* thing to be conſidered in this expreſs verbal covenanting with God, is the way how it is to be performed and managed; and beſide what was ſaid before in heart-cloſing with Chriſt, I add here. 1. The man ſhould do it *confidently*, not only believing, that he is about

his

his duty, when he doth it, but also, that God in Christ Jesus will accept his poor imperfect way of doing this duty, he doth accept a man according to what he hath, if there be a willing mind, 2 *Cor* 8. 12. a mite is accepted, since it is all the poor womans substance. *Mark* 12 44 yea, if it can be attained, the man should believe that the issue and consequence of this transacting shal prove comfortable, and all shall be well, and that God who engageth for all in the Covenant, (since he hath determined the man to this happy choice) will in some measure make him forth coming, and will perfect what concerns him: Faithful is he who hath promised, who will also do it, 1 *Thess.* 5. 24. If this confidence be wanting; the matter will be done with much fear and jealousie, If not worse and will still prove a disquieting business to the man. 2. It should be done *holily*, It is called the holy Covenant, *Luk.* 1. 72. The holy things of *David Act* 13. 34. Here it were fitting, that what is done in this express transacting with God, should not be done passingly. and on the by but in some special address unto God; the thing should be spoken unto the Lord, *Psal* 142. 5 it is beseeming in so great a businesse, that a piece of time were set a part for confession and supplication before God; yea, also the person so transacting with God should labor to have high apprehensions of Gods greatness and Soveraignty, 2 *Sam.* 7. 22 although he thus humble himself to behold things in heaven and earth, and these high and holy thoughts of him, will and should

be, attended with debasing & humbling thoughts of self, although admitted to this high dignity. 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. It is no smal thing to be allyed unto, and with the great God of Heaven, and his Son Christ, as *David* speaketh when King *Saul* did offer his Daughter unto him, 1 *Sam.* 18. 22. Yea further, there should be special guarding & watching, that the heart keep spiritual in transacting with God; there is great reason for this holy way in performing the duty; for men are ready to mistake themselves and to shape the Lord according to their own fancy, and to turn carnal in the business, since it is a manage transaction held out in all the ordinary expressions of love, as in the Song of *Solomon*, *Isa.* 62. 5. *Zeph* 3. 17.

The *fourth* thing we shal speak a word unto, is, what should follow upon this express verbal covenanting with God; I say, beside that union and communion with God in Christ, following upon believing, If a man explicitely by word transact with God. 1. He should thenceforth be singularly careful to abide close by God in all manner of conversation; for if a man thenceforth do any thing unsuitable, he doth falsifie his word before God, which will stick much in his conscience, and prove a snare; If a man henceforth misken God, and take on him to dispose of himself, since he is not his own, and hath opened his mouth unto the Lord, he makes enquiry after vowes, and devoureth that which is holy. *Prov* 20 25. 2. He who so transacteth with God, should hold stedfast that

determination and conclusion; it is a shame for a man, whose heart hath closed with God,& whose mouth hath ratified and confirmed it solemnly before him, to contradict himself again,and to admit any thing to the contrary; he ought boldly to maintain the thing against all deadly.

Then let me obtest you who desire to be established in the matter of your interest in God,that with all conveniency you set a part a piece of time for prayer before God, and labouring to work up your heart to seriousness, affection, and the faith of the duty, to make a Covenant, and to transact with God by express word after this manner.

O Lord, I *am a lost and broken creature by nature, and by innummerable actual transgressions which* I *do confess particularly before thee this day, and although being born within the visible Church* I *was from the womb in Covenant with thee, and had the same sealed unto me in Baptism, yet for a long time* I *have lived without God in the world, senseless and ignorant of my obligation, by vertue of that Covenant. Thou hast (at length) discovered unto me, and bound upon my heart my miserable estate in my self, and hast made manifest unto my heart the satisfying relief thou hast provided by Christ Jesus, offering the same freely unto me upon condition that* I *would accept of the same, and would close with thee as my God in Christ, warranting and commanding me, upon my utmost peril to accept of this offer, and to flee unto Christ Jesus; yea, to my apprehension, now thou hast soveraignly determined my heart. and shaped it for Christ Jesus, leading it out after him in*

the

the offers of the Gospel, causing me to approach unto the living God, to close so with him and to acquiesce in his offer, without any known guile. And that I may come up to that establishment of Spirit in this matter, which should be to my comfort, and the praise of thy glorious grace, therefore I am here this day to put that matter out of question, by express words before thee, according to thy will And now I, unworthy as I am do declare that I believe that Christ Jesus who was slain at Jerusalm, was the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; I do believe that record that there is life eternal for men in him, and in him only I do this day in my heart please and acquiesce in that device of saving sinners by him, and do intrust my soul unto him. I do accept of reconciliation with God through him, and do close with thee as my God in him. I choose him in all that he is, and all that may follow him, and do resign up my self; and what I am or have unto thee, desiring to be divorced from every thing hateful unto thee, and that without exception, or reservation of any thing (consistent within my knowledge) or intended reversion. Here I give the hand to thee, and do take all things about me witnesses that I, whatever I be, or have hitherto been, do accept of Gods offer of peace through Christ, and do make a sure Covenant with thee this day never to be ranversed, hoping that thou wilt make all things forth coming both on thy part and mine: seriously begging (as I desire to be saved) that my corruptions may be subdued, and my neck brought under thy sweet yoke in all things, and my heart made cheerfully to acquiesce in whatsoever thou dost unto me, or with me, in order to these ends Now glory be unto thee, O Father,

who

who deviseth such a salvation, and gave thy Son to accomplish it. Glory be to Christ Jesus, who at so dear a rate did purchase the out letting of that love from the Fathers bosom, and through whom alone this access is granted, and in whom I am reconciled to God, and honorably united unto him, and am no more an enemy or stranger. Glory to the Holy Ghost, who did alarm me when I was destroying my self; and who did not only convince me of my hazard, but did also open my eyes on behold the relief provided in Christ: yea, and did perswade and determine my wild heart to fall in love with Christ, as the enriching treasure: And this day doth teach me how to covenant with God, and how to impropriate to my self all the sure mercies of David and blessings of Abraham, and to secure to my self the favour and friendship of God for ever. Now with my soul, heart, head and whole man as I can I do acquiesce in my choice this day henceforth resolving not to be my own but thine and that the care of whatsoever concerns me, shal be to thee, as my head and Lord; protesting humbly, that failings on my part (against which I resolve thou knowest) shal not make void this Covenant: for so hast thou said, which I intend not to abuse, but so much the more to cleave close unto thee, and I must have liberty to renew, ratifie, and draw extracts, of this transaction, as often as shal be found needful. Now I know thy consent to this bargain stands recorded in Scripture, so as I need no new signification of it; and I having accepted of thy offer upon thy own terms, will henceforth wait for what is good, and for thy salvation in end As thou art faithfull, pardon what is amiss in my way of doing the thing and accept me in my sweet Lord Jesus, in whom I only

desire

desire pardon: and in testimony hereof, I set to my seal that God is true in declaring him a competent Savior.

Let people covenant with God in few or more words, as the Lord shal dispose them: for we intend no plat-form of words for any person; only it were fitting that men should, before the Lord, acknowledge their lost state in themselves, and the relief that is by Christ, and that they do declare that they accept of the same as it is offered in the Gospel, and do thankfully rest satisfied with it, in trusting themselves henceforth wholly unto God to be saved in his way, for which they wait according to his faithfulness. If men would heartily and sincerely do this, it might, through the Lords blessing, help to establish them against many fears and jealousies; and they might dare some good thing from this day and hour, which might prove comfortable unto them when they fall in the dark afterwards, and even when many failings do stare them in the face, perhaps at the hour of death, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. It is much if a man can appeal unto God, and say, Thou knowest there was a day and an hour, when in such a place I did accept of peace through Christ, and did deliver up my heart to thee, to write on it thy whole Law without exception, heaven and earth are witnesses of it: Remember the word unto thy servant, on which thou causedst me to hope.

Object.

Object.

I dare not adventure to ſpeak ſuch words unto God, becauſe I find not my heart coming up full length in affection and ſeriouſneſs: So I ſhould but lie unto God in tranſacting ſo with him.

Anſw.

It is to be regrated that mens heart, doth not with much benſail of deſire and affection, imbrace and welcome that bleſſed offer and portion. Yet for anſwer to the objection, remember, 1. That thoſe to whom the Lord giveth the new heart, forming Chriſt in them, the whole heart is not renewed, there is fleſh and ſpirit luſting againſt other, the one contrary unto the other, ſo as a man can neither do the good or evil he would do with full benſail, *Gal.* 5. 17. It is well if there be a good part of their heart going out after Chriſt, deſiring to cloſe with him on his own terms. 2. That there is often a rational love in the heart unto Chriſt Jeſus, expreſſing it ſelf by a reſpect to his Commandments, 1 *John* 5. 3. when there is not a ſenſible prevailing love which maketh the ſoul ſick, *Cant.* 2. 5. Men muſt not alwayes expect to find this. I ſay then, although ſomewhat in your heart draw back, yet if you can ſay you are convinced of your broken ſtate without him, you want a righteouſneſs to cover your guilt, and you want ſtrength to ſtand out againſt ſin, or to do what is pleaſing before God; You alſo ſee fulneſs in him in both theſe reſpects: you dare ſay ſomewhat, within your heart; would be fain at him upon his own terms, and would have

both

both righteousnes for justification, and strength in order to sanctification; and what is within you, contradicting this, is your burden, in some measure, and your bondage. If it be so, your heart is brought up a tollerable length; go on to the business, and determine the matter by covenanting with God, and say with your mouth, that ye have both righteousnes & strength in God, as he hath sworn you shal do, *Isa.* 45.25. It is is approven Divinity to say unto God, I believe, when much misbelief is in me, and the heart divided in the case, *Mark* 9. 24. Withal, show unto God how matters are in your heart, that so you may be without guile before him, concealing nothing from him, and put your heart, as it is in his hand to write his Law on it, according to the covenant: for that is the thing he seeks of men, that they deliver up their heart to him, that he may stamp it with his whole will without exception, and if you can heartily consent unto that, judging Christs blood a sufficient ransome and satisfaction for mens transgression, you may go and expresly strike Covenant with God; for your heart and affection is already engaged.

Object. *I dare not so covenant with God, lest I break to him; yea, I perswaded my self, that if such a temptation did offer so and so circumstantiate, I would fall before it, and succumb Therefore to transact so with God, whilst I forsee such a thing, were but to aggrege my condemnation.*

A. 1. You have already entered Covenant with God, as you are a member of his visible Church, and what is now prest upon you, is, but that

that you more heartily, sincerly, particularly, and more expressly covenant and transact with him, you are already obliged heartily to close with God in Christ, and if you do it in heart, I hope the hazard is no greater by saying that you do so, or have done so 2. What will you do if you shift hearty transacting with God in Christ, and do not accept his peace as it is offered? you have not a second of it in the world, either you must do this or perish for ever; and if you do it with your heart, you may also say it with your tongue. 3. If people may fear at covenanting with God because they will afterwards transgress; Then not one man should covenant with God: for surely every one will transgress afterwards, if they live any length of time after the transaction; and we know no way like this to secure men from falling: for if you covenant honestly with him, he engageth, beside the new heart, to put his fear and Law therein to give his Spirit to cause you walk in his way; and when you covenant with God you deliver up your self unto him to be sanctified and made conform to his will: It is rather a giving up of your self to be led in his way in all things, and kept from every evil way, then any formal engagement on your part, to keep his way, and to hold off from evil. So that ye need not fear at the Covenant, the language whereof is, *Wilt thou not be made clean? Jer.* 13.27. And all that shun to strike Covenant with God, do thereby declare, that they desire not to be made clean. 4. As it is hard for any to say confidently they will transgress, if such a ten-

tentation did offer, so and so circumstantiate, be-
cause men may think that either God will keep
tentation out of their way, or not suffer them to be
tempted above what they are able to bear, or give
to them a way of escape, *Psal.* 46. 1. 1 *Cor.* 10. 13.
So the question is not, what I may do afterward
but what I now resolve to do. If my heart charge
me presently with any deceit or reluctancy to
transgress, I must lay aside that deceit before I
transact with God. But if my heart charge me
with no such purpose, yea, I dare say, I resolve a-
gainst every transgression; and although I think
I will fall before such and such a tentation, yet
that thought floweth not from any allowed and
approven resolution to do so, but from knowledge
of my own corruption and of what I have done to
provoke God to desert me. But the Lord knows
I resolve not to transgress, nor do I approve any
secret inclination of my heart to such a sin, but
would reckon it my singular mercy to be kept
from sin in such a case; and I judge my self a
wretched man, because of such a body of death
within me, which doth threaten to make me trans-
gress. In that case, I say, my heart doth not con-
demn me, therefore I may and ought to have con-
fidence before God, 1 *Joh.* 3. 21. If this then be the
case, I say to thee, although thou should afterwards
fail many ways, & so perhaps draw upon thy
self sad temporal stroaks thereby, & lose for a sea-
son many expressions of this love; and yet there
is an Advocat w the Father to plead thy pardon 1
Joh. 2. 1. who hath satisfie for our breaches,

Isa.

Isa. 53.5.6. and for his sake, God resolveth to hold fast the Covenant wth men after their transgression, *Psal.* 89.30.37. else could he be said to betroth us unto himself for ever? *Hos.* 2. 19 20 And how could the Covenant be called *everlasting, ordered in all things and sure*, if there were not ground of comfort in it, even when our house is not so and so with God? 2 *Sam.* 23 5. Yea, it were no better than the Covenant of Works, if these who enter it with God could so depart from him again, as to make it void unto themselves, and to put themselves into a worse condition then they were into before they made it, *Jer.* 32 40 compared with *Heb.* 8. 6 The Lord hateth putting away, *Mal.* 2. 16 No honest heart will stumble on this, but will rather be strengthned thereby in his duty, *Hos.* 14. 9. For other tyes and bounds, besides divorce, and punishment by death, do oblige the ingenuous wife unto duty. So here men will *fear the Lord and his goodness*, Hos. 3 5.

Object. *I have at the celebration of the Lords Supper and at some other occasions, covenanted expresly and verbally with God; but my fruitlesness in his ways and the renewed jealousies of my gracious state maketh me question if ever* I *transacted with God in sincerity, and* I *think* I *can do it no other wayes then* I *have done it.*

Answ. 1. Men are not to expect fruitfulness according to their desire, nor full assurance of Gods favor, immediatly after they have fled unto Christ, and expresly transacted with God in him. These things will keep a man

on

on work all his dayes. The Saints had their failin[illegible] and short-comings, yea and back sidings, wi[illegible] many fits of dangerous misbelief, after they h[illegible] very seriously, and sincerely, and expressly clos[illegible] with God, as their God in Christ.

2. Many do look for fruitfulness in their wa[illegible] and establishment of faith, from their own sin-cerity, in transacting with God, rather then fro[illegible] the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. They heft thei[illegible] heart in their own honesty and resolutions, an[illegible] not in the blessed root Christ Jesus, withou[illegible] whom we can do nothing, and are vanity altoge-ther in our best estate. Men should remember, that one piece of grace cannot produce any de-gree of grace: further, nothing can work grace, but the arm of Jehovah: And if men would lean unto Christ, and covenant with him, as their duty absolutely, whatsoever may be the consequence; at least, looking only to him for the suitable fruit, it should be far better with them: God pleaseth not that men should betake themselves unto Christ, and covenant with him for a season, until they see if such and such fruit and establishment shal follow, purposing to dis-claim their interest in him and the Covenant, if such and such fruit doth not appear within such a length of time. This is to put the wayes of God to tryal, and is very displeasing unto him, resol-ving to maintain these things as their duty, and a ready way to reach fruit, whatsoever shal follow thereupon, they having a testimony within them, that they seriously design conformity to his re-

vealed

vealed will in all things; and that they have cloſed covenant with him for the ſame end, as well as to be ſaved thereby.

3. Men ſhould be ſparing to bring in queſtion their ſincerity in tranſacting with God, unleſs they can ſtruct the ſame, or have great preſumptions for it. If you can inſtruct any deceit or guile in your tranſacting with him, you are obliged to diſclaim and rectifie it, and to tranſact with God honeſtly, and without guile. But if you know nothing of your deceit or guile in the day you did contract with him; yea, you can ſay, that you did appeal unto God in that day, that you dealt honeſtly with him, and intended not to deceive; and did obteſt him, according to his faithfulneſs, to ſearch and try it there was any crookedneſs in your way, and to diſcover it unto you, and heal it, *Pſal.* 136. 23. 23. and afterwards you came to the light, that your deeds might be manifeſt, *John* 3. 20. 21. And you can ſay, that God anſwers from his Word to you, in ſo far as you could underſtand, were anſwers of peace, and confirmations of your ſincerity. Yea, further, you dare ſay, that if upon life and death, you were again to tranſact with him, you can do it no other way, nor intending more ſincerity and ſeriouſneſs than before. Then I dare ſay unto thee, in the Lords Name, thou ought not to queſtion thy ſincerity in tranſacting with God, but to have confidence before God, ſince thy heart doth not condemn thee, 1 *John* 3. 21. And thou art bound to believe that God dealeth uprightly

with

with the upright man, and with the pure d
ſhow himſelf pure. *Pſal.* 18. 25. 26. If a m
intend honeſty, God will not ſuffer him to b
guile himſelf; yea, the Lord ſuffereth no man
deceive himſelf, unleſs the man intend to decei
both God and men.

4. Therefore, impute your unfruitfulneſs
your unwatchfulneſs and your misbelief; and im
pute your want of full aſſurance, unto an ev
heart of unbelief, helped by ſatan to act agai
the glorious free grace of God, and charge n
theſe things upon want of ſincerity in cloſing wi
Chriſt, And reſolve henceforth to abide cloſe b
the root, and you ſhal bring forth more fruit; an
by much fruit, you lay your ſelf open to the wi
neſs of Gods Spirit, which will teſtifie with you
ſpirit, that you have ſincerely and honeſtly clo
ſed with God, and that the reſt of your works ar
wrought in God, and approven off him; and ſo
the witneſs of the Spirit and the Water, joyning
with the Blood, whereupon you are to lay the
weight of your ſoul and conſcience, and where
alone you are to ſink the curſes of the Law du
unto you for all your ſins, and failings in your be
things. Theſe three do agree in one, *viz.* Tha
this is the way of life and peace, and that you hav
intereſt therein, and ſo you come to quyetneſs an
full aſſurance, *John* 15. 4. 5. *and* 14. 21. 23. *Rom.*
8. 16. 1 *John* 5. 8.

O bleſſed bargain of the New Covenant, and
thrice bleſſed Mediator of the ſame! Let him
ride proſperouſly, and ſubdue Nations and Lan-
guages,

guages, and gather in all his jewels, that honourable company of the first-born, that stately troup of Kings and Priests, whose glory it shall be to have washed their garments in the blood of that spotless Lamb, and whose happiness shall continually flowrish, in following him whethersoever he goeth, and in being in the immediat company of the Ancient of dayes; one sight of whose face, shall make them in a manner forget that ever they were in the earth. Oh ! if I could perswade men to believe, that these things are not yea and nay, and to make haste towards him who hasteth to judge the world, and to call men to an account, especially anent their improvement of this Gospel. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

FINIS.

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